

INDIAN TALES.

NEW INDIAN TALES
Tales of Raja Birbal

THE RAYA & APPAJI

The Son-in-Law Abroad

And Other Indian Folk-Tales of Fun, Folly

Tales of...

Mariada Raman

PREFACE.

To an Englishman sojourning or staying in India, a knowledge of its peoples is highly necessary. Nothing is likely to give him a truer insight into the character of the people of this country than the tales that are current among them. I have frequently had repeated to me several tales, each carrying a moral lesson of its own, from which the present is only a random selection. A great many of these are distinctly amusing, while some at least of them appear to have their foundations in fact. I have not, for obvious reasons, tried to probe the historical origins of the latter. Judging the stories from the standpoint of the listener, I should think that some of them are just the ones that would make even the most morose enjoy a hearty laugh. I know that a great many say that Indians are a philosophical race with little of that hilarity that is so marked a feature of the peoples of the West. These tales, however, give the lie direct to that oft-repeated opinion. Whatever their philosophy, which I think really belongs to their learned few, they are a race that can give and take a joke.

EGMORE,
5th March, 1910. }

C. H. R.

MAITREYI.

A VEDIC STORY IN SIX CHAPTERS.

BY PANDIT SITANATH TATTVABHUSHAN.

Indian Mirror.— The Author has recalled to life the dead bones of a very ancient and classical anecdote, and embellished it with his own imagination and philosophical disquisition. Pandit Sitanath has made the Maitreyi of the Vedic-age as she should be—catholic, stout-hearted and intellectual and has through her mouth introduced and discussed many intricate, philosophical and social topics. We wish this little book every success.

SECOND EDITION. As. Four.

G. A. NATESAN & CO., ESPLANADE, MADRAS.

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NEW INDIAN TALES.

I.

THE TALE OF TWO CUPS.

A POOR man with numerous children to support was daily begged by his wife to try his luck by travel. He at last yielded to her importunities and resolved upon a long tour round the country. Overjoyed at his determination, his wife, as became a thoughtful woman, prepared for him an excellent dish of curd-and-rice* and handing the same to him asked him to partake of his dinner on the banks of a river and sleep, when necessary, under the cool shade of a big tree. With his repast in his hand, the poor man trudged on some miles during the hottest

* A favorite dish with Hindus of all classes. Mustard fried in ghee with a few dried chillies, adds to the flavor. An excellent dish for tropical climates.

portion of the day. At last, he arrived near a river, seeing which his wife's counsel came to his mind. He looked round for a tree and having espied a grove not far away, he moved with difficulty to it. He suspended his meal to one of the branches of a tree and lay down to take some rest. Unaccustomed to such travel, he soon fell asleep and knew not what took place thereafter. It was evening, and Parvati and Paramesvar, the twin-deities fond of travel, happened just then to pass that way. The soft breeze carried the sweet smell of the dish to them and Parvati, eager to know what it was, suggested they might descend to the earth below and see wherefrom came the pleasing smell. Paramesvar assented and both came down from their Vimana* and saw the poor traveller in sound sleep, with his meal hanging gently in the breeze.

Parvati suggested that they might partake of the dish, the more so as they were much exhausted. Parasenavar, agreeing, they emptied its contents and made a hearty repast. They then replaced the bronze cup of the traveller with a golden cup of magical powers, and resumed their aerial flight. The traveller was awoken soon after and being hungry thought of the meal hanging in the tree. He washed himself in the river and taking the dish to its banks, he spread a plantain leaf and brought the knotted dish to empty its contents. Untying it, he found not his own bronze cup but the golden one of the deities. "Lo! what has happened? Whose work is this? Is this true?" So exclaiming, he took up the cup, and looking it up anxiously on all sides, he placed it upside down on his own leaf and took it up, when he found his platter full of the finest dishes and the

choicest cakes.. "This is a gift of the gods," muttered he to himself and soon finishing his meal, he ran homewards with the golden cup secure under his armpit. He narrated the story of the exchange to his wife, who felt overjoyed at the prospect now open to them. To mark their thankfulness to the benignant deities, they stood a dinner to all the people in their village, who were not a little astonished at the magical cup and its properties of satisfying all the wishes of their possessors.

Jealous of their success, the wife of the adjoining house-owner worried her husband to go about on a travel and bring a similar cup. She also gave him a cup of curd-and-rice, and he lay down under the shade of a tree as his neighbour had done, after he had gone a good distance. A Brahma Rakshasa * and his wife

* A Hindu hobgoblin.

chanced to pass that side and attracted by the smell, they descended to the earth and partaking of the contents in the cup, they replaced the bronze cup with a leaden cup. After a while, the traveller got up and noticing the change in the cup, he at once went back to his wife. Highly pleased, she invited all the villagers to a dinner. The platters being spread, the cup was placed upside down on the first of them and removed. Immediately after that, two hobgoblins rose up and cut off the nose of the man who sat at the head of the platter and went on repeating their cruel work, until all ended in confusion and the people fled to their homes.

Jealousy brings punishment in its train.

II.

THE KING AND THE SANYASIN.

A Sanyasin, in his wanderings, came to the capital seat of a king and mistaking his palace for a chutram, lay down in its outer courtyard. Much exhausted by a fatiguing foot-journey, he fell into a deep slumber and was sleeping soundly, when he was rudely awakened by a set of guards who kept watch over the place. They roundly took him to task for presuming to sleep in the palace courtyard and asked him to clear out forthwith, on pain of being handed up to the city Kotwal.

He protested he had mistaken the place for a chutram and had unwittingly stretched himself in it. The noise caused by the guards reached the king's ears above, who looked down and enquired what the matter was. Explanations followed on the part of the guards and the king summoning the Sanyasin to his side, demanded how he dared mistake a

palace for a caravansera. "Well" said the Sanyasin, "let us see." And added: "Who built this palace, my Lord?" "My father," replied the king. "And where is he," quoth the Sanyasin. "He is dead," answered the king. "Who is here now?" rejoined the Sanyasin. "Myself," said the king. "Who will be here after you?" queried the Sanyasin. "My son, by the grace of God," replied the king. "Well" wound up the Sanyasin, "judging from the history of this palace, I see as old people go out new people are succeeding them in their places. None seem to stay on for ever in it, and I do not, so far as I can, see wherein comes the difference between it and a chutram." And forthwith rolling up his tiger's skin and placing it under his armpit, moved away quickly from the spot.

*Men will not remain, but words, will last.
Nothing lasts to eternity but good deeds.*

III..

HOW A COOK BECAME A JUDGE.

Once upon a time there lived a rich man who dealt in precious stones and other valuables. Wanting some good pearls, he had at his house one day a number of the most eminent importers of that article exhibiting their varied and costly wares. The rich man himself had not yet finished his morning ablutions and was being helped at them by a young kitchen lad who attracted by the magnificent brilliance of one of the pearls then being admired by all there, poured the water from the jug away from the stretched hands of his master. "What is up with you," cried the rich man, "you seem to be out of wits." The young man explained that his eyes had unconsciously turned towards those shining pearls and that therefore, his hands

had gone astray. "What have you to do with pearls, my man?" ejaculated the master, "they may concern learned Pandits, victorious heroes of battles* and wealthy men, but I fail to see the connection between a kitchen lad and the precious pearls there." The young man was hit to the quick and determined upon so improving himself as to merit the presentation of countless pearls of which he had a sight that day. He betook himself to the best seats of learning and there schooled himself in the ancient lore of his forefathers. He then went about visiting the courts of the richest kings and chiefs in the country and by his disputation won great name for himself. At last he came to the residence of the rich man, his old master, who was now in a destitute condition, having lost all his wealth in

* Pandits and victors in hard fought battles were in ancient days presented with necklaces of pearls in India.

some mercantile transactions. He told him who he was and exhibiting the several pearl necklaces he had had as gifts from princes and kings throughout the land, thanked him for the great good he had done him by his reproof.

"No, No, my friend," mumbled he in reply, "I was sorry afterwards that I had used harsh language towards you, the more so that after you left me, it was all a losing concern with me." The Pandit consoled him as well as it lay in his power and by his influence at the royal courts, he got him resuscitated in his fortunes. His own profundity was recognised by the conferment of a judge's post on him at the court of the Peshwa Madhava Rao.

A word is medicine to the wise.

One word to the good man, one stroke to the good bullock.

Prosperity is grass-like.

IV.

THE WASHERMAN WHO LOST BOTH CLOTH AND TREASURE.

A washerman was once washing on one bank of a river. Observing, a fine stone at the other bank, he placed all the washed cloths on the slab on which he had so far washed, and taking the rest, he went to the new stone on the opposite bank. Turning it upside down by accident, he saw a small vessel full of gold mohurs. Taking it up eagerly, he deposited it near the slab and began washing clothes on it. As he went up to the other bank to transfer the washed cloths, floods came on with great force. With the object of saving the vessel of mohurs, he ran to the opposite bank. Meanwhile the floods came with even greater force, and washed away both the washed cloths and the vessel of the gold mohurs.

There is no limit to avarice.

Much would have more.

V.

THE TREACHEROUS MINISTER
RUNNISHED.

Once upon a time one Vira Dhurandara ruled over Vidyanagara.* He had a minister of the name of Tatwa Prakasa. One day when the king, accompanied by the minister, went out to hunt, he came to a spring of water named the "Looking-Glass," near which lay a slab with an inscription on it which said that the king who listened to his minister would perish. The king, on seeing it, asked the minister what it was about. The minister took counsel with himself. He flung the king into the spring and coming back to the capital, usurped the kingdom. Queen Chinnamma Devi, the late

* Or Vijayanagar, the Beejnagar of Portuguese travellers. Its splendid ruins are some 7 miles from Hospet, near Bellary.

king's wife, fled the city, and lived in a secluded place at Chandragiri.* The governor of that place, threatened her life, and she, being then pregnant, left the place to Avasanapuri, whose chief showed her great mercy. She gave birth to a son named Veera Rama, who became a very learned man while yet very young. He defeated many Pandits, and by his profundity won the hand of the Pantiyen King's daughter. The great army of his father-in-law being now at his command, he advanced at its head and defeated the usurper and put him to death. He was then crowned king to the great satisfaction of all his subjects.

Treachery recoils on those who are guilty of it.

* Capital of the Vijayanagar Kings, after the destruction of Vijayanagar in 1565. It is in the modern N. Arcot District and contains some good architectural remains.



VI.

THE MILLIONAIRE AND HIS SUITOR.

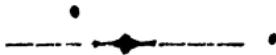
A millionaire was once busy searching something that he had dropped down. Just then, a poor man entered his mansion and after detailing his story, wanted to know if he would undertake to help him with some money to start some work he had taken on hand. He listened to the man patiently and eventually consented to render the assistance required of him. During the course of the whole conversation, the millionaire was astutely searching for the small *Kalanju* * he had dropped. The suitor was rather struck with it and begged to know what it may be that claimed so much attention at his hands. "A Kalanju," said he and

*A small gold coin said to have been in use in ancient times in Southern India.

continued his search as before. The petitioner changed colour, observing which the wealthy man remarked: "Friend, who cares not for a small loss, cares not for a great loss. I don't reckon him wise, who neglects his little losses." "Yes," muttered the suitor to himself, "would he have become a millionaire if he had lived otherwise", and went home richer for the lesson he had learnt.

Rain drops make the ocean.

Trifles ought not to be neglected.



VII. .

THE VAJDIC TAHSILDAR
SECULARISED..

A Brahman learned in the Vedas aspired to the post of a Tahsildar during the days of Tipu Sultan. The Minister gave him an ample gift and dissuaded him from trying for a secular appointment. The Brahman would not listen. Finding him inexorable, the Minister of Tipu remarked that he would have to know Hindustani to transact his daily business if he became a Tahsildar. "Yes," said he, "one of my men will learn it." "Be it so," quoth the Minister, and appointed him. On his approach at the city to which he was nominated, all the merchants and chief inhabitants received him with great *éclat*, and made *nazzars*.* Everything went on well, for a time and

* Benevolences.

one Thimmannā Bhat learned Hindustani by repeating sentences picked up in the bazaar. One day, not long after, two Sowars came up to the Tahsildar's residence with a letter from the Huzur † arrived at the Tahsildar's. They stated in high flown Hindustani their errand. Thimmannā Bhatt was hastily summoned to inquire what the matter was. He asked, quoting one of his bazaar sentences,—“What is the price of a seer of mutton?” Thinking he was mistaken, one of the Sowars cried out: “Where is the Tahsildar, we have a letter to deliver.” The Bhatt replied, quoting another acquired sentence of his: “If you sell the seer at two annas give me; else don't want.” The Sowars thought he should be mad and beat him with great violence and in the confusion that followed, the Tahsildar barely escaped with his life.

Aspire not to that which you are not fit.

† Chief Office at the Capital.

VIII.

THE FOOL ON AN ERRAND.

A fool was once asked to buy a cocoanut. He went to the nearest bazaar and demanded its price. The shopkeeper said one anna. He tried ten pies, but without success. He went to the big bazaar and there learnt the price was ten pies, but he tried six pies. He was advised to go the adjoining village to buy at that price. There they said the price was six pies but he tried to get one for nothing. They asked him to go to the garden only two miles off. This he did and the gardener asked him to get up the tree and take a couple of cocoanuts. Agreeing, the foolish man got up the tree, but before he could cut off the cocoanuts, he slipped and fell down and hurt himself badly.

That which is near is not valued.

The tree in the backyard won't do for medicine

The cow from afar gives plenty of milk.

IX.

THE TALE OF TWO IDIOTS.

AS a big drum was being beaten, two idiots thought that there was a man inside the drum who made the noise it produced. On the drummer leaving the instrument for being tempered over the fire, the two idiots approached it and closely examined it. One of them tore one side of it and put his hand in, while the other did the same on the other side. Each feeling the other's hand inside, thought he had caught the man making the noise. As they stood quarrelling there the drummer came and seeing what they had done with his instrument, severely thrashed both of them and turned them out.

If an ass joins an ass, both jump up and kick each other.

X.

THE KING AND THE OLD MAN.

A N old man was once busy ploughing his fields, when the king of the country, who was not well disposed towards his subjects, happened to ride that side. Attracted by the bent-down figure of the man he drew up his reins and called out to the man. He quickly ran to the king and prostrating himself down begged to know what his Sovereign Lord demanded of him. Curious to know his age, the king asked him if he had known his father the late king.* “Yes” said he, “I had known him and his father, my Lord’s grandfather and...”, “You are then over seventy-five years of age,” interrupted the king. “May be,” quietly replied the

* Amongst Hindus, it is customary to avoid a direct question as to age.

old man; "but my Lord will permit me to say that I am but seven years now." "Ah! Ah! what is it you say, seven years, only seven years?" ejaculated he in surprise. "So it is my Lord," rejoined the old man, "counting only the number of years I have lived for the good of others. Of what benefit is it to others to live a life of slothfulness and ease?" The king was deeply touched by the wise words of the old man and thanking him rode off. From that day onwards the king was a different man altogether.

[*A bad man is as] dead while living, [and a good man is as a] living [person] while dead [for his good deeds live after him].*



XI.

THE TRADER'S REVENGE.

A TYBANT Mahomedan ruler took a fancy for a fair maiden of the trader caste and asked for her hand: The traders could not well refuse but took counsel amongst themselves and determined upon teaching a lesson to the wicked ruler. They resolved upon quitting their abodes but before doing that they brought a Sow, tied it to the pandal post and left the place before daybreak in a body. The next morning, the king, went in state to marry the girl promised him but to his dismay and utter confusion found a Sow tied up to the post. Being a Mahomedan, he felt the greatest disgust at the sight of the animal and retreated hastily. Learning that the traders had fled the town, he ran in pursuit, but the river was in floods, and he returned home a sadder but wiser man.

As is the Raja, so will the virtue of the people be.

* Traders in South India are of different castes. They are Beris, Komatis, Vaniyas, &c. One of the first of these is said to be meant here.

XII.

THE FAITHFUL DOG.

A rich merchant once went to a market-fair. Having sold his wares, he was returning home with his money-purse and his dog. He was waylaid by a thief who for the sake of the money killed the merchant and threw his corpse into the tank at which he stayed to have his supper. The dog escaped somehow and arriving at the dead man's house, would neither eat nor drink but only cry in the most sullen manner and wag his tail continuously. Thinking it might happen to know something about the dead man's fate, the merchant's sons followed the dog which took him to the tank. Arriving at it, it went round it three times and dug its forefeet continuously in the water. Thinking he might

have been thrown into the well, they examined the well and discovered his corpse in it. After that, the dog went off to the murderer's cottage in the next Paracheri and entering it, caught hold of the man, who had done the foul deed. It bit him so hard that he had to come out of his hut. He was apprehended there and then and marched off by the villagers to the residence of the city Kotwali.

Trust in a dog and you are never betrayed.

XIII.

THE WRONG MAN HANGED.

DURING the reign of Tipu Sultan, a man committed murder at Denkani Kotta.* He was not found out, but the Kotwal catching hold of a man in Danayakan Kotta,† said : " The murderer of Denkani Kotta is not yet found out ; but one of Danayakan Kotta has been caught hold off. He is also a fit man for punishment." " The difference between Denkani Kotta and Danayakan Kotta is very little indeed. Well, go on execute him", said the Sultan careless of the consequences of his words.

Injustice knows no bounds.

* A village in the modern Salem District, notorious for its murders.

† A deserted village in the present Coimbatore District.

XIV.

THE FALSE BAIRAGI AND HIS FEAR.

A young Bairagi begged from door to door and out of his earnings saved enough to make unto himself a golden cup which he always carried in his knapsack. One day he met an old Bairagi travelling in state with a large retinue. He saw him halt at a large caravansera outside the town and there joined him. Getting as he did free meals, he wished to stay on with him. The old Bairagi and his troupe, however, would travel only between sunset and sunrise, and rest for the day at the first village they reached at daybreak. The young Bairagi disliked this, for fear he should lose his golden cup. He kept on lagging behind on his travels with the old Bairagi and his companions, frequently crying

out: "It is dark, it is dark; I am afraid, I am afraid. Can we not travel by day and rest by night." "No," said the old Bairagi, "that is against the rules of our Order. Either follow our regulations or hold back and begone." Requests and reproofs went on for some days together, and the old Bairagi suspecting that the young man carried some valuable with him, watched him rather closely. One day while all were asleep after a heavy dinner, the young Bairagi, looking all round and finding all in deep slumber, placed his knapsack on the courtyard of the caravansera and went to answer nature's call. The old Bairagi saw his time and quickly stole to the place where the knapsack was and quietly opening it displaced the golden cup with a cocoanut shell and a stone and threw away the golden cup far off in the wild forest surrounding the caravansera. The unsus-

pecting young man took up his knapsack and in the next night march complained as usual of darkness and of fear. "Fear not, brother, fear not," said the old Bairagi, "darkness there is none to our Order and as for your fear, it is left behind, it is left behind." He repeated this rather pointedly more than once and the young man felt his knapsack and found it to contain nothing more than a cocoanut shell and a stone. He then bewailed his misfortune and cried out hoarsely he had been thieved. By that time, the day broke and the old Bairagi chiding him for his love of lucre, took him to a big boulder and standing on it, poured some water on it and rubbed a leaf on it thereafter. Instantaneously the whole boulder turned pure gold. "Here you are; dig away as much as you want of it and begone for ever from us."

There is a link between money and life.

XV.

THE GRATEFUL SERVANT-MAID.

ONCE upon a time there lived a king, whose kingdom was again and again attacked by neighbouring chiefs who were at enmity with him. While out on an expedition to drive back one of them, another invaded his capital and his troops fought bravely but lay dead to a man on the field. Hearing that the queen would next be taken captive by the conquering hosts, her servant-maid proposed to her that she might be allowed to put on her dress and ornaments and pass off for her. The queen at first was much against any harm coming to her faithful handmaid, but in the face of the danger that awaited them, she had to yield to her importunities. The maid soon transformed herself into the queen and sat on a raised platform, talking to some persons

who pretended to be her attendants: The invaders appeared ere long before the palace and saying that their king had commissioned them to bring the queen captive claimed entrance into it. An old woman replied to them that she would willingly take a few of them as their chosen representatives, if they but agreed amongst themselves as to who these should be, so that they may speak in person to their queen. They consented and five of them soon accompanied the old woman into the palace and there introduced them to the pretended queen. She said without much ado, in reply to their king's orders to them, that she would follow them. Glad that their business was so easily done, they marched her off in a palanquin to their king's dominions. Astonished at her behaviour their king allotted a palace for her residence and treated her becomingly in other respects.

The king, meanwhile, returned from his expedition, only to find that his home had been rendered unhappy by the raid of one of his other enemies. He soon raised a force and carried the war into the enemy's country. The battle that was waged between the opposing armies was a most fierce one, and, at every step, the enemy was beaten and in consequence fled in confusion before the ever advancing hosts. At last, a truce was sued for and granted. The captive queen was asked to come out and stop the war on pain of losing her life. She boldly refused to do any such thing and said she would rather lose her life there and then, than beg of her own soldiers to stop waging war with a king who had taken opportunity of his neighbour's absence elsewhere and taken his royal queen captive. This raised the ire of the enemy king but he was afraid to carry out his threat, for he

feared the issue of the war that had been then going on.

The captive queen had meanwhile secured some friends amongst her guards and attendants, her intrepidity, boldness and personal charm uniting in making them her slaves. With their connivance, and active assistance, she one night made good her escape to the camp of her own king. She urged him to advance sharp upon the enemy, who was then in a hopelessly desperate mood. He did this with all possible speed with the result that the enemy was completely beaten, taken captive and his country annexed. The services of the handmaid were handsomely recognised by the king.

The elephant is an elephant whether on high ground or low.

When honor has gone, why life ?



XVI.

THE FALSE ASTROLOGER.

AN astrologer was once consulted by a king as to his longevity. The astrologer said that the king would not live longer than six months. The king then demanded how long he himself would live. Before he could answer the question, the king dealt a blow on his head saying that he was dying at that very moment. "You know not," added he in anger, "your own fate and why prophecy you the fates of others."

Fools prophecy others fates but know not their own.

XVII.

THE THIEF CAUGHT RED-HANDED.

A MAN had trained a parrot with great care and had taught it to speak. Whenever he called out: "Ram! Ram! where are you?" it would reply: "Here I am." One day, a man entered his house with a number of others and at a convenient opportunity opened the cage and transferred the parrot from it to his own pocket. At that moment, the owner came up to exhibit his bird and cried out "Ram! Ram! where are you?" "Here am I, here am I," cried out the bird from the pocket, of the man, to whom its owner wanted to exhibit the bird. The man was caught hold of and made over to the Kotwal for being dealt with according to law.

A thief lays his own snare.

XVIII.

THE DAUGHTER THAT NEVER WAS BORN.

A WOMAN who had long been married, wished for a child but God did not bless her with one. The thought of having a daughter had so taken possession of her that one night she seriously questioned her husband what name should be given to their child. The husband chid her a little but it was of no avail. She again and again proposed the name of "Sita" and at last he, to put an end to her importunities, assented. She then begged permission to present her with all her jewellery, to which he consented. A thief, who had come with a felonious intent and was hiding at the entrance door, heard this conversation, and quietly went away. Next day, he re-appeared at an hour when

the master of the house was absent at the Nawab's 'Cutcherry,' and introduced himself to the woman as the husband of her dear Sita, her own daughter. Highly pleased, she entertained him to an excellent dinner and enquired of the errand on which he had come. He said that Sita wanted her mother's jewellery for use and so she had sent him to fetch them. The woman collected all her jewellery and locking them up in a small box, gave the same to him with the key. By instinct that ~~he~~ was in pursuit of him and letting the box (which he had tied up securely in his large shoulder sack) into a low thicket, he sat down on the roadside and began singing hymns and begging for coins of wayfarers. The husband of the woman soon overtook him and knowing not who he was (for he had not so far seen him in person) enquired if he had seen a thief or a person with a box go

that side "Yes," said he, "I did see one but a quarter-of-a-h-l-i-q-u-r ago. If you give me your horse, I shall be able to ride quickly and catch hold of him." The man assented and dismounting from the horse, made it over to him. The man got up the horse (with his sack) and rode off at gallop, never to be found again.

Don't reckon your eggs before they are laid.

Tying beads round an unborn child.

Giving a name to an unborn child.



XIX.

THE EXILE KING AND THE GENEROUS "BRAHMAN."

ONCE upon a time there lived a king who by a combination of evil circumstances lost his kingdom and wandered from place to place. Troubled by hunger, he was eagerly looking out for a kind soul who might take some pity on him. Just at that time, he observed an old Brahman, coming out of his house and placing some boiled rice for the birds of the air. The king saw that he had at last found a man, who might be of some use to him at that time. Stepping forward, he quietly entered the Brahman's house and told him of his piteously hungry state. The Brahman at once invited him to a dinner and spread all that had been prepared for the day. But the king's hun-

ger was not fully satisfied. The Brahman and his wife were sorely troubled, for their poverty was so great that they did not possess anything in store for contingencies. The king quickly saw through their difficulty and at once made up his mind. He called for the Brahman and thanking him cordially for the help he had rendered him, sought permission to resume his journey. The Brahman said he was bitterly sorry that he could not be of greater use to him and added that but for his poverty he would have made him more comfortable. The king consoled him as well as he could and remarking that better days should surely be in store for such a kind and generous man as he had shown himself to be, he took leave of his host and departed. Before long he got back his lost kingdom and was installed afresh on the throne of his forefathers. The Brahman and his wife mean-

while had just returned from a long tour of pilgrimage and were halting at the king's choultry. The king, who had already despatched some of his men to fetch the pair from their old abode, was overjoyed to meet them in his own capital city. He took them to his own place, and entertained them in a manner becoming his position. He bestowed on them valuable presents and affording them all necessary help, he gave them leave to finish their pilgrimage.

Men who do good to others will have good done them.

Tales of Raja Birbal

21 Amusing Stories

BY

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PREFACE.

To people speaking the Dravidian languages, the name of Birbal is probably new. But it is quite as famous in Northern India as that of Tennalirama is in the South. Both were highly cultured men. Each was the favourite of a great king. Tennalirama was a native of the village of Tenali in the Kistna District, and lived according to popular tradition among the Telugus, during the time of the great Vijayanagar King, Krishna Deva Raya.

An account of the life of Birbal is to be found in the *Ain-i-Akbari* of Abul Fazl.* Raja Birbal (Bir Bar) was a Brahman. His original name according to Abul Fazl was Mabesh Das and according to Badauni was Brahm Das. He was a Bhat or minstrel. The Bhats were a class of men whom the Persians called *bad farosh*, 'dealers in encomiums.' He was very poor but clear-headed, and remarkable for

* Vide *Ain-i-Akbari* translated by Mr. Blochmann.

his power of apprehension. According to Bedauni, he came soon after Akbar's accession from Kalpi to court where his *bop-mots* in a short time "made" him a general favourite. His *Hinqî* verses also were much liked and Akbar conferred on him the title of *Kab Rai*, or (Hindu) Poet Laureate, and had him constantly near himself.

In the eighteenth year of Akbar's reign, Rajah Jai Chand of Nagarkot, who was at court, happened to displease the Emperor and was imprisoned. Nagarkot was given to Birbal as jagir. He also received the title of Rajah at this time. But due to later complications, he did not get the jagir. He accompanied Akbar on his forced march to Patan and Ahmedabad.

He was often employed in missions. Thus in the twenty-first year, he was sent with Rai Lon Karan to Dungarpur, the Rai of which town was anxious to send his daughter to Akbar's harem. In the twenty-eighth year again he and Zain Kokah conducted Rajah Ram Chand to court.

Birbal spent his time chiefly at court. In the thirty-fourth year. Zain Khan Kokah marched against the Yusufzais in Bijor and Sawad; and as he had to ask for reinforcements, Birbal was sent there together with Hakim Abul Fath. It is said that Akbar determined by lot whether Abul Fazl or Birbal should go and the lot fell on the latter much against Akbar's wish. The result of this campaign was very unfortunate. Birbal and nearly 8,000 imperialists were killed during the retreat—the severest defeat which Akbar's army ever suffered. The Emperor felt the death of Birbal very much. He is reported to have said, "Alas! they could not even get his body out of the pass, that it might have been burned;" but at last he consoled himself with the thought that Birbal was now free and independent of all earthly fetters, and as the rays of the sun were sufficient for him, there was no necessity that he should be cleansed by fire.

The following passages from Badauni are of interest :-

“ Among the silly lies—they border on absurdities—which were spread over the country after the retreat, was the rumour that Bir Bar the accursed, was still alive, though in reality he had then for some time been burning in the seventh hell. The Hindus by whom His Majesty is surrounded, saw how sad and sorry he was for Bir Bar’s loss, and invented the story that Bir Bar had been seen in the hills of Nagarkot, walking about with Jogis and Sannasis. His Majesty believed the rumour, thinking that Bir Bar was ashamed to come to court on account of the defeat which he had suffered at the hands of the Yusufzais; and it was besides, quite probable that he should have been seen with Jogis inasmuch as he had never cared for the world. An Ahadi was therefore sent to Nagarkot, to inquire into the truth of the rumour, when it was proved that the whole story was an absurdity.”

“ Soon after, His Majesty received a report that Bir Bar had been seen at Kalinjar (which was the jagir of this dog), and the collector of the district stated that a barber had

recognised him by certain marks on his body, which the man had distinctly seen, when one day Bir Bar had engaged him to rub his body with oil; from that time, however, Bir Bar had concealed himself. His Majesty then ordered the barber to come to court; and the Hindu Krori (collector) got hold of some poor innocent traveller, charged him with murder, and kept him in concealment, giving out that he was Bir Bar. The Krori could, of course, send no barber to court; he therefore killed the poor traveller to avoid detection and reported that it was Bir Bar in reality, but he had since died. His Majesty went actually through a second mourning; but he ordered that Krori and several others to come to court. They were for sometime tortured as a punishment for not having informed His Majesty before, and the Krori had, moreover, to pay a heavy fine."

Birbal was as much renowned for his liberality, as for his musical skill and poetical talent. His short verses, *bon-mots*, and jokes, are still in the mouths of the people of Hindustan.

The hatred which Badauni, and other pious Muslims showed towards Birbal arose from the belief that Birbal had influenced Akbar to abjure Islam.

It is not easy to estimate the share which Birbal had in the religious evolution of Akbar's mind. But a few facts are quite clear. It was Birbal who taught Akbar to worship the sun. It must have been largely due to his influence that the Emperor wore the Hindu mark on the head and put on the Brahminical thread. The interdiction of the eating of beef was also probably due to his influence.

Two incidents referred to by Badauni give us an idea how Birbal gave offence to the Muslims. Once there was a religious discussion in the court and in the words of Badauni, "Shahbaz got excited and took a part in the conversation ; and when Bir Bar—that hellish dog—made a sneering remark at our religion, Shahbaz abused him roundly and said, "You cursed infidel, do you talk in this manner ? It would not take me long to settle you." It got quite uncomfortable, when

His Majesty scolded Shahbaz and the others severely."

The other incident took place in 1582 A.D. To quote from Badauni again. "In Rabi'ussani 990, Mir Fathullah came from Dakhin. Mir Fathullah was a bigoted Shah. Once the Emperor in Fathullah's presence said to Bir Bar, "I really wonder how any one in his senses can believe that a man whose body has a certain weight, could in the space of a moment, leave his bed, go up to heaven, there have 90,000 conversations with God, and yet on his return find his bed still warm?" So also was the splitting of the moon ridiculed. "Why," said His Majesty, lifting up one foot, "it is really impossible for me to lift the other foot! What silly stories men will believe?" And that wretch (Bir Bar) and some other wretches—whose names be forgotten—said, "Yea, we believe! Ye we trust!" This great foot experiment was repeated over and over again. All the while His Majesty was looking at Fathullah, the new-comer, probably because he expected him to say something; but he

looked straight before himself and did not utter a syllable, though he was all ear." As Mr. Blochmann observes Akbar probably thought that by referring to the weight of a man and the following experiment with his foot, he could induce Fathullah who was a good mechanic to make some remark on the Prophet's ascension.

There are several small books containing the so-called stories of Birbal, in Urdu, and the other languages of Northern India. This contains a selection of some of the more interesting stories. Stories I to XIX are from a book in Urdu and XX and XXI from a Gujarati book.

My thanks are due to my old pupils Messrs. F. Mohamed Sherif and Najamudin Ahmed who interpreted the stories from Urdu.

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TALES OF RAJA BIRBAL.

THE EARLY HISTORY OF BIRBAL.

ABDUL Khadir Badauni,* Abul Fazl † and Moullana Azath are the three writers who furnish us with information regarding Birbal, the greatest wit at Akbar's court. The first two have recorded only fragments of his life in the Padsha's court. The third has written a somewhat complete account of the life and doings of the Raja and we are indebted to it for much of our information.

* Badauni was an orthodox Muhammadan historian. He was a very remarkable man. He had studied from his early youth various sciences under the most renowned and pious men of his age and had come to excel in music, history and astronomy. His sweet voice procured for him the appointment of Court Iman for Fridays.....

Birbal was born in 1541, A. D. in an insignificant village known as Marjal on the banks of the river Godavari. He was born in a pious Brahman family of the Surber sect. The lad was hardly four years old when his father was taken away by the cruel hand of death. There are conflicting accounts as to his early life. Moulāna Azath, relying on some authorities, gives the original name of the hero as Hesh Das and considers him to have been a Brahman of the Bhat sect. Abdul Khadir agrees with this writer in regarding Birbal as a Brahman but differs as to the original name and place of birth. According to him the name was Brahm

Under instructions from Akbar he translated the Rama-yana from its original Sanskrit into Persian, as well as part of the Mahabharata. His chief historical work is Tarikh-i-Badauni or Annals of Badauni. It is a very favourite book with bigoted Muhammadans who disliked the innovations of Akbar.—Akbar by G. B. Malleson C. S. I., Rulers of India Series.

† Faizi and Abul Fazl were brothers. They were two learned men who enjoyed very intimate friendship with Akbar. They possessed the same eclectic spirit in religion as Akbar.

Das and the place of birth Kalpi. The death of the father Kali Das, told severely on the health of the poor mother who soon followed her husband. Birbal had two brothers: the elder brother Mohan Ram died in early infancy; and the younger Ganga Ram renounced the world and went to the forests of Nepal to lead the life of a recluse. Then Birbal who was left an orphan had to be taken care of by his father's relatives. But fate was not relentless. The chief pandit of the state of Kalinjar gave his daughter in marriage to him. He now lived a life of affluence and ease at his father-in-law's house. The father-in-law died soon after and Birbal was made the chief pandit of the state.

The new pandit distinguished himself so much that before long his fame spread beyond the confines of the small state.

BIRBAL'S INTRODUCTION INTO THE COURT OF AKBAR.

THERE are different accounts as to how Birbal got into Akbar's court. One account has it that after sometime he relinquished his post in Kalinjar, and went to Delhi. Here his learning and piety helped him to become the *purohit** of one Ramchand, a very wealthy man. But Birbal's wit could not be hidden under a bushel, and accounts of his wit and humour were related in the bazaars of Delhi. Akbar came to hear of Birbal. In his court there were many learned men, but there was necessary also a court fool (*muskhara*). Birbal was taken to the court that he might please the Padsha (Emperor) in his leisure hours. According to Moulanc Arzath, Akbar and Birbal

* The family priest.

met by some accident and became friends. Abdul Khadir Badauni writes : " Akbar from the beginning had a liking for the Hindus. One day he met this poor Brahman priest Brahm Das of Kalpi, singing for alms in the streets of Delhi. He took pity on him and liked him for his music* and wit. Their acquaintance gradually grew into intimate friendship." There is still another account of the introduction of Birbal into the court of Akbar.

One day an attendant of the Padsha served him *pansupari* with a little

* There is abundant evidence to prove that Akbar was not only fond of music, but was very musical himself. He delighted in the old tunes of Khwarizm, and, according to Abul Fazl, himself composed "more than two hundred of these, which are the delight of young and old." The same authority states that "his Majesty had such a knowledge of the science of music as trained musicians do not possess." Every day the court was treated to an abundance of music, the sounds of which have in all times been especially agreeable to Eastern Monarchs—Akbar, by G. B. Malleson, C. S. I., Rulers of India Series.

† Betel-leaf and nut which Indians are in the habit of chewing.

too much of chunam. As a result of it, the Emperor's mouth smarted a little. He grew angry and ordered the attendant to go and purchase from the bazaar a quarter of a measure of chunam. The servant when he went to the bazaar met Birbal there. The latter who was inquisitive by nature asked him why he required so much chunam. The servant narrated to him what had happened. Whereon Birbal warned him that the chunam which he was buying was meant to be used by the angry Monarch to encompass his destruction. He further advised the servant to buy along with it an equal quantity of ghee and instructed him to drink the ghee after having been made to consume the chunam. The servant then went to the Padsha and was ordered* by him to dissolve the chunam in

* This story is not likely to be true, for Akbar abhorred cruelty.

water and drink the solution. The servant obeyed but afterwards drank the ghee. When the servant appeared again before the Padsha uninjured, he was asked to explain how he managed to survive the draught. Thereon the servant related how he acted up to the advice of the stranger. Akbar wondered at the device adopted and sent for Birbal. When Birbal came, the Padsha received him very kindly and ordered that he should henceforth be attached to his court.

Birbal's culture and the keen sense of humour with which nature had endowed him eminently fitted him to play his role in the court. He was well acquainted with Urdu literature so much so that Akbar soon made him the *malikushora* (the Poet Laureate) and paid him two thousand gold mohurs per month. The Emperor was lavish in the honours

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that he conferred on him. The learned Brahman was the recipient of so many titles that it is said that one had to write at least two lines before one could actually write his name. Besides all this the Padsha conferred on him also the title of 'Raja.' Indeed Birbal rose so high in Akbar's favour and grew so intimate with him, that many a time the presence of the wit would be required even in the royal bed-chamber to regale the Emperor.

I.

BIRBAL'S EARLY HUMOUR.

WHEN Birbal was six years old, he used to keep company with a mischievous Mussalman lad. The two lads once observed a certain pair of dogs playing together. The colour of the bitch was black, and might be therefore called in Urdu, *Kali*, a black one. The name of Birbal's mother was also Kali. "Look how Kali plays with the dog," said the Mussalman lad. Though Birbal was only a young child, yet there were indications of his prospective wit. He retorted : "In your eyes the bitch is black, but pray ask the dog, she is *Nemath* (a blessing) in his eyes." Now the mother of the Muhammadan lad was called Nemath, and the rebuke went home to him.

II.

TO MAKE A LINE SHORTER.

AFTER a vexatious debate in the court, the Padsha drew a line on the floor and asked his courtiers who were hotly discussing as to who was the wisest among them, to make it shorter, without rubbing off a portion of it. The courtiers did not know what to do, and kept silent. Then Birbal stood up at once and drew a longer line by its side. The king and the courtiers agreed that the original line was now made shorter by comparison with the longer one.

III. •

THE SON-IN-LAW WORSE THAN THE DOG.

ONE day Akbar asked Birbal to present before him one of his own kindred who was ungrateful, and one not related to him but who was grateful to him. Birbal agreed to do so and brought to the court the Padsha's son-in-law and a dog. The courtiers thought that it was against rules to take a dog* into the royal presence. But repugnant as the procedure was, to their feelings, they dared not disallow Birbal. He

* Dogs had been looked upon by Muhammadans as unclean animals, and the strict Muhammadans of the present day still regard them as such. Akbar declared them to be clean:—Akbar, by G. B. Malleson, C.S.I., *Rulers of India Series*.

It is curious to note that the orthodox Hindus whose ways of looking at things are generally different from those of the Muhammadans are at one with them in this respect.

went to the king straightway and said, "Those whom Huzur* wished to see are in readiness."

"Let us see them," observed Akbar. "Here is the ungrateful one," said Birbal pointing to the young man. "Though you gave him your daughter and several lacs of rupees, yet he is not satisfied and speaks ill of your Majesty behind your back." "Well, let us have a look at the other," observed the Padsha trying to put on a cheerful face. Birbal produced the dog and said, "Here is the grateful one. He is satisfied with a crust of bread and keeps guard at the door. He keeps awake when the master sleeps and sees that no harm happens to him."

* Your Majesty.

IV.

BIRBAL'S IMPUDENCE.

ONCE the Padsha expressed his desire to see Birbal's son. Birbal joyfully agreed to bring his son to the court. He went home and said to his son, "The Padsha wishes to see you, but do not say anything in reply to his questions." The young man accordingly went to the court, and appeared before Akbar. The Monarch imagining that his favourite's son would be a young prodigy, put him several questions. But the youngster did not open his lips even once. He was then sent away. The next day when Birbal came to the court, the disappointed Monarch asked him what he should have done, if he had put questions to a stupid

person who was no more responsive than a wall. "May it please your Majesty," replied the jester, "you should have kept quiet too and desisted from putting questions."

V.

TOBACCO AND THE ASS

MULLA Dopiazza and Raja Birbal were the two learned and famous jesters in the court of Akbar. These two people delighted the king with an exercise of their wit. Though Mulla Dopiazza was the equal of Raja Birbal in point of ability, the latter was the greater favourite of the Padsha, and there was no limit as to the extent of the liberty he could take with the Emperor.

One day Akbar and Birbal were seated on the terrace of the royal palace. Opposite to them there was a tobacco field and an ass was standing in it. Birbal was fond of smoking and chewing tobacco. Therefore the Padsha directing

his attention towards the field observed,
“ See, tobacco is such a bad thing that
even an ass does not like to eat it.” Birbal
smiling rejoined, “ Only people who are
like the ass discard the fragrant leaf.”

VI.

THE ILL-OMENED MAN.

ONCE Akbar asked Birbal, if he knew of any ill-omened man in Delhi. "Yes, I have heard of a man in the city," replied Birbal, "and it is said of him that if one were to look at his face early in the morning, one would not get a crust of bread the whole day." "Bring him here one morning and we shall try the experiment," said the Emperor.* Birbal brought the unlucky man to the Padsha's palace and arranged matters in such a way that he was the first person whom the Emperor saw after getting up from bed. It somehow happened that the Emperor was so busy that day, engaged in the business

* With all his liberality and breadth of view Akbar himself was not free from superstition.—Akbar. Rulers of India Series.

of the state that he could not find time to eat till the evening. He sent for Birbal and observed, "The man is undoubtedly very ill-omened, let him, therefore, be hanged." Birbal replied, "O King of Kings, by having seen his face in the morning, you could not find time to eat, but he is to be hanged by having beheld your Majesty's face. Now, pray, decide who is the more ill-omened person." Akbar saw the unwisdom of his order, and accordingly remitted the sentence.

VII.

AKBAR'S VANITY REBUKED.

AKBAR'S tastes and fancies constantly underwent a change. In his last days he conceived a liking for European costume and used to dress himself like a white Sahib. He was fond of pearls and always wore a necklace of them. One evening as he was walking along the seashore he flung his precious garland over the waves. But no sooner had he done so, than he ordered Birbal to fetch it back. "Pray, excuse me," replied the wit, "let it travel on the waves, so that it may proclaim Thy glory in the land of the whites," and the Padsha was silent.

VIII.

THE PADSHA REPROVED.

ONE day the Padsha said to Birbal, "I dreamt last night that I bathed in rose water and that you were lying down in a latrine." "I have also dreamt an equally wonderful dream, but I am afraid to narrate it to you," replied Birbal. "Fear not," said the Padsha, "our grace and forgiveness towards our servants are unlimited." "Then, pray listen unto me, last night as your Majesty was bathing in the choicest rose water, I was kissing your feet. But lo ! to my utter surprise your Majesty stooped down to lick my back." Now it is the greatest insult to a Mussalman to be compared to a dog.

IX.

THE MILK OF A BULLOCK.

ONCE the Padsha ordered Birbal to procure for him the milk of a bullock. The latter was at his wits' end, and prayed for a week's time just to put off the Monarch's wrath. No sooner was the request made than it was granted. Birbal, then went home, and sat down quite dejected. His wife who was a wise and clever lady thought that the king might have proposed some riddle which he was not able to solve. She approached her husband and enquired what troubled his mind. He replied, "The king has ordered me to supply him with the milk of a bullock and hence I am dejected not knowing what to do." The .

wife smiled, and said that it was not a difficult task and that she would see to its being done. "I shall however lay down one condition," she said, "that you don't leave the house for one week, and let me have your company all to myself." Birbal was not unwilling to act as desired. On the seventh day she decked herself, took a bundle of clothes, and went to the tank opposite to the royal palace to wash them. She began washing the clothes on the steps of the tank. The Padsha when he beheld the beautiful lady so richly dressed engaged in such menial work as washing clothes, wondered what could have made her do so and sent for her. And on her being brought to his presence observed : "Tell us, fair lady what has put you to the necessity of washing clothes."

"May it please your Majesty," she answered, "Our servant has absconded

and my husband has been delivered of a child : hence the urgency."

" May Allah save us ! What is the world coming to ? Is there indeed such a man ? "

" The world is certainly come to a strange pass, when her ruler requires his ministers to procure for him bullock's milk." Akbar understood that she was the wife of Birbal and sent her home with rich presents.

X.

THE MOST IMPORTANT LEAF.

ONCE on a time after a sumptuous dinner when the Padsha was surrounded by his courtiers he asked them which was the most important leaf. After a consultation they submitted to him that they considered the plantain leaf to be the most important one as it was the largest in size. The answer was not acceptable to the king. Birbal who was seated near the throne, exclaimed that the *pan* was the leaf *par excellence* because it gave a sweet breath to the royal lips. All applauded the answer and the Padsha also was pleased.

XI.

THE SIX BEST THINGS.

ON a fine evening Akbar and Birbal went through an avenue of trees in Delhi, enjoying the delicious breeze. The conversation turned on various topics. They talked of the glories of the tropical sky, of the grandeur of the sunset, as it would appear when viewed from one of the highest palaces, of the calm repose of the huge trees whose foliage rustled a little by the gentle breeze and of the birds of variegated plumage which were seeking their night's shelter. They reflected on the goodness of the Creator who was the Author of the sky and the rainbow coloured clouds. As they walked along, a gurgling, gushing brook attract-

ed their attention. On approaching it they were charmed by the weird, twisted picture of the sky, clouds and trees which the brook in its tortuous course mirrored forth. They sat for a while on its bank inhaling the cool air laden with the fragrance of a thousand forest flowers. Then as they were leaving this pleasant spot Akbar asked Birbal to name to him the best milk, the best leaf, the best flower, the best fruit, the best king and the best sweetness. Birbal stood up and answered, "Mother's milk is the best as the child grows to be a great man on it. The *pan* is the most useful among leaves as everyone eats it. Of flowers, that of the cotton plant claims the foremost rank as it clothes us. A dutiful son is indeed the best fruit as the virtues of the ancestors continue to live in him. Indra is the most benevolent among kings as he sends down rain which nourishes the

whole earth. Sweetness of kind words
is the most pleasing, as one wins the
affection of people thereby without spend-
ing any money."

XII.

THE THREE QUESTIONS.

ONCE Khaja Sara, one of Akbar's favourite courtiers, growing envious of Birbal resolved on doing him mischief and induced the king to ask him the following three questions :

- (1) Which is the centre of the earth?
- (2) How many stars are there in the firmament?
- (3) What is the exact number of men and women in the world?

The Padsha sent for Birbal and asked him to answer the questions of Khaja Sara. Birbal at once planted a stick in ground and said that the spot where it stood was the centre of the earth, but if Khaja Sara was not sure he might

measure the earth and satisfy himself. He sent for a ram, and when it was brought exclaimed, "There are as many stars in the sky as there are hair on the body of this beast which Khaja Sara might count for himself at his leisure." As to the third question he observed that it was not possible to give an exact answer, but that if all the men and women were murdered, it would be easy to know their number exactly.

XIII.

THE USE OF INGENUITY.

ONE day the Padsha asked Birbal what one should make use of in a fight. Birbal replied that one should make use of one's ingenuity.

“ What a fool you are ! ” exclaimed the king ; “ Of what use is ingenuity before a weapon ? ” “ Let us have a trial,” rejoined Birbal. The very next day he had an opportunity of proving what he had said. A stout elephant got out of control and ran in his direction. When he saw the infuriated beast going towards him, having no means of protection, he was alarmed a little. But immediately he picked up courage as he saw a dead dog lying close at hand. He took hold of the carcase

and flung it on the face of the elephant. It got frightened, turned back and ran away. In the meanwhile the Padsha arrived on the scene. Birbal narrated to him his encounter with the elephant and how he got out of it unscathed though unarmed. The Padsha expressed his admiration for Birbal's resourcefulness. "So it is clear," observed the latter, "how helpful ingenuity is in an emergency."

XIV.

THE JEALOUSY OF THE COURTIERS REBUKED.

WHEN the courtiers saw that Birbal was enjoying the special favour of the King, they became jealous of him and tried their best to get rid of him from the *durbar*. Some of the favoured ones among them who were intimate with Akbar represented to him that Birbal did not possess any special qualities which were absent in others and that it was not advisable that a man so vain as he was should be in a high position. The Padsha answered that Birbal performed deeds which the others could not possibly do. Then they begged of him to set them a task which he thought was beyond their capacity. He promised to do so

in due time and ordered that Birbal should not be admitted into the *durbar* any more. Two or three days after this incident he ordered them to have a *razai*,* 4 feet long and 3 feet wide made. A few hours later the *razai* of the required dimensions was produced in the court. Then the Padsha said to the courtiers, "I shall lie down and you'll cover my body completely with the *razai*." All of them tried their best to do so but failed. He ordered that Birbal should be sent for. Birbal came and requested to be informed what he had to do. The Padsha pointing to the cloth said "Cover me completely with yonder *razai*." Forthwith he folded the king's legs a little and covered the body completely with the *razai*. The courtiers remarked that Birbal ought not to have impudently folded the Padsha's legs.

* A bed sheet.

Birbal answered, " There is a maxim that one should not stretch one's legs beyond the length of the *razai*."

XV.

THE PUNISHMENT OF THE GATE-KEEPERS.

ONE day Raja Birbal came to the entrance of the Padsha's palace and wanted to go in. The chopdars (gate-keepers) refused to allow him to enter. Raja Birbal swore that he would give half of what he got to one and a fourth to the other. Thereupon, the sentries allowed him to go in. He went to the Padsha and told him strange stories. The King was very much pleased with the stories and ordered Birbal to ask for a present. Birbal prayed that he might be given a thousand blows with a shoe. The Emperor wondered at the queer request but thought there might be some

*hikmat** in it and ordered one of his attendants to give him the blows in the manner which he himself might prescribe. The Raja, went out and pointed one of the chopdars to be given half the number of blows and the other a 'fourth. He then asked the attendant to keep the remaining fourth in reserve.

* Skill, contrivance, philosophy.

XVI.

BIRBAL ON THE QUESTION OF SHAVING THE BEARD.

ONE day when Akbar was holding his *durbar*, a discussion arose among his courtiers on the question of shaving the beard. Those learned in Muhammadan lore quoted verses from the *Kuran*, to prove that the beard should on no account be shaved. "If the beard is shaved," said they, "one would commit heinous sin." There were some astute *Brahmans* in the court and they were of opinion that there was considerable wisdom evinced in the injunction that a

man should grow his beard. "For," said they, "Arabia is subject to extremes of temperature, and in the winter chill winds, perchance, blow in the country, so that the Prophet solicitous of the health of the faithful, ordained that they should grow their beards, in order that the hair may protect the glands of the throat, and ward off nasty colds." The discussion was however a profitless one, and was taking too much of the valuable time of the Emperor. Birbal saw this, rose, and addressing the Monarch said : " May it please your Majesty, order a razor to be brought, and I shall shave off the beards of all the learned Aalims and Faazils* assembled here and then there will be no discussion regarding beards." There was a truce to all discussion as all were afraid lest

* Both the words are Arabic. An Aalim is a learned man and a Faazil is a doctor of learning.

the Padsha should carry out the suggestion of his favourite.*

* In the later years of his reign Akbar introduced, to the great annoyance of the bigoted party at his court, the practice of shaving the beard. In a hot country such as India the advantages arising, from the use of the razor are too obvious to need discussion. But although the order was not obligatory, the compliance or non-compliance with the custom became a distinguishing mark at the imperial court. Few things are more repugnant to a devout Mussalman than the shaving of his beard. It was so then and it is so now. The example set in this respect by the sovereign caused then many murmurs and much secret discontent:—Akbar : Rulers of India Series.

Akbar, in 1000 (1592 A.D.) forced his courtiers to shave off their beards:—Aini Akbari translated by Blockman.

The long beard was worn by all good Muslims, but Akbar ordered the officers of his court to appear with shaven faces. This was in the year 1592, when he was fifty years old:—The Mogul Emperors of Hindustan by E. S. Holden.

1. The door of Shah Akbar, the victorious, is a paradise of rest;

2. And if I have my beard, I do so not to beautify myself,

3. But because beards, like crimes, are of a deep black dye, and can therefore, have no place in a paradise:—*Ghayur of Ricar*.

XVII.

THE WATER IN THE GANGES IS AMRIT.

ONCE the Padsha asked Birbal to tell him which river contained the best water. Birbal answered that the water in the Jamna was the best. The Emperor remarked, "According to your religion the water of the Ganges is the best and you must indeed be very ignorant of Hindu beliefs, since you speak of the water of the Jamna as being the best." Birbal rejoined that what was contained in the Ganges was not water, but Amrit.*

* The drink of the Gods.

XVIII.

A SENSIBLE REPLY.

AS Akbar was once very cross with Birbal, the latter left the kingdom and went away somewhere. The Emperor missed him in the court very much and was anxious to know where he had gone. He caused a communication to be issued from his court to the several feudatory princes that his oceans were "going to be married and that he wanted their oceans to be present on the auspicious occasion. The princes who received the message did not know what reply they were to send to the Padsha. At last one prince in whose kingdom Birbal had taken refuge, sent the following reply, " We send our oceans to the ceremony, let your

wells receive them." When Akbar got the answer* he knew that such a sensible reply could have emanated only from Birbal. He accordingly sent for Birbal and became friendly with him once again.

* It is interesting to know that even as early as in the days of Akbar some at least were not ignorant of the fact that the water evaporating from the sea is stored for use in wells.

SIX.

DIFFERENT KINDS OF BLIND MEN.

ONE day Akbar, reprimanding Birbal for some fault, called him a blind man. "Pardon me, your Majesty," said Birbal, "there are many kinds of blind men, of what kind am I ?" The Padshah taken aback a little asked him to mention the different classes of blind men. "There are two main classes," answered Birbal, "viz., those who have no eyes and those who have eyes, but are still blind in some fashion or other. The last class again has three sub-divisions, as far as I can remember viz., 1. those who have eyes, but do not make use of them; 2. those who are blinded by wealth and 3. those who are blind in some organ of

their body, e. g., the legs etc.* And I am sure there is many another kind of blind men, but I am forgetful at present." The Padsha ordered Birbal to give examples of the different classes of blind men. "If you do not do so," said he to Birbal, "we shall have both your eyes put out." Birbal prayed that he might be allowed some time to make up his answer.

A few days afterwards he went to the market place, spread his *rumal**, sat thereon with ink and paper before him and went on writing. Some of the servants of the *Sirkar*† by whom he was recognised asked him what he was doing there and Birbal wrote down their names. Next day he went to the prominent officials dressed shabbily. They thought that the Padsha might have been displeased with him. Some of them did not speak to

* The cloth worn over the shoulders.

† The King.

him, while others said. " We do not know who you are." Whereon Birbal took down their names under the category of men blinded by wealth. He issued a notice to these two classes of men to be present at court on a certain day. He himself went to the court on that day and receiving them asked them to be waiting till they received further orders. He then saw the Padsha and informed him that he had brought with him two kinds of blind-men and they would be presented before him if required. The Padsha wanted them to be produced. Birbal produced them and also gave the lists. " My lists give the classification and Huzur may satisfy himself," said he. First the Padsha wanted Birbal to point out those who were blind in the eyes. When Birbal presented the people whom he had put under that head, the Emperor remarked

in anger that only a blind man would say that they were blind in the eyes.

“ May Your Majesty pardon me,” said Birbal, “ one day, I spread my *rumal* in the market place and sitting thereon was writing. These people asked me what I was doing, although they saw what I was doing. Hence I have put them down as people blind in the eyes.” The Padsha burst into a hearty laugh and asked Birbal to produce those who may be regarded as having been rendered blind by wealth. Birbal pointing to those who did not recognise him when he was poorly dressed said, “ May Huzur be pleased to ask these whether they can make out who I am.” When the Padsha looked at them, those officials were ashamed and did not know what to say. Birbal observed, “ I went to their houses in this poor dress and they recognised me not. So I thought that wealth had de-

priv'd them of ordinary vision which men possess." The Padsha laughed again and asked Birbal to try and produce people who may be regarded as being blind in the legs. The ever resourceful wit promised to do so ere long.

A few days later there was a great concourse of people in the Padsha's palace on account of a feast. After dusk Birbal entered the palace followed by some companions. The latter as they came along shouted that the palace had caught fire outside. Several people rushed out being frightened and in the hurry wrongly put on shoes not belonging to them. When they came out there was no fire and they soon discovered that Birbal and his accomplices were responsible for the scare.

The Vazir represented to Akbar that Birbal was liable to be punished for having raised a false alarm. The Padsha

called on his favourite to explain his conduct. Birbal replied "Oh, king, I wanted to test whether the people were blind in the legs or not. Huzur will see that only a few people are wearing their own shoes. The others have exchanged theirs, wherefore I deem them to be blind in the legs". The courtiers who would fain have Birbal somehow disgraced, felt ashamed when they heard this. The Padsha enjoyed a hearty laugh and richly rewarded Birbal.

XX.

BIRBAL ACTS THE PART OF A CHILD.

ONCE Akbar held a grand durbar. There were present around him all his ministers, all the generals of his forces, the feudatory princes and several nobles. The eyes of all present were in quest of one important figure of the Emperor's court, viz., Birbal who was at once the chief jester as well as the favourite adviser of the Emperor. The Padsha was all impatience to see him and so sent word to him to be present at the durbar immediately. When Birbal came and took his seat, the Padsha asked him why he was so late.

“ My Lord,” said Birbal, “ I should have been here long ago but for my little son who was cross. He was weeping his

eyes out for I know not what. And it took me all this time to appease him. "What," asked the Padsha, "is it so difficult a task to pacify a child?" Birbal answered "My Lord knows little of such things. You have no children and even if you have, the duty of looking after them will not devolve on your imperial shoulders."

"No, no," said the Emperor, "I am not ignorant in such matters and were I you, I should have easily satisfied the child."

To this, Birbal made reply, "My Lord, what are your humble subjects but your children. Now I one, of your subjects, shall start crying and do you then make trial of your skill." The Padsha instantly agreed to this. And Birbal began crying most piteously like a child. The Emperor descended from his throne trying to act his part and asked him in ten-

der soothing tones, "My son, what ails you, why do you cry, and what will you have? Would you have baby-like toys, fruits or flowers? My darling, do but name your wish and you shall have it instantly. This but seemed to make the baby all the more cross and he cried still more violently. The royal father after a great deal of trouble got him to prattle out, "Papa, I want a stick of sugarcane." Greatly relieved in mind, Akbar ordered a number of them to be brought and the baby was allowed his choice of them. Taking one of these, Birbal the baby, started crying again as if his heart would break. The Padsha wondering what the baby wanted tried to comfort him again and after some trouble found that the baby now desired the cane to be cut into nice thin slices. But the astonishment of the Emperor knew no bounds, when the baby started

cried at the top of his voice when the wondering servants set before him, the plate of sliced sugarcane. The Emperor applied himself to the task again and succeeded only, when he was almost at his wit's ends, to elicit the request that the baby now desired his royal papa to reconstruct the sugarcane from the slices. By this last request Akbar was completely baffled and gave up the game, declaring Birbal the victor.

XXI.

BIRBAL AND TANSEN.

AS Birbal grew in the good-will and favour of Akbar, he naturally became an object of jealousy to the Muhammadan noblemen that formed part of his court. They could not but resent the King's preference for Birbal in all matters affecting the state. This feeling gradually acquired such strength, that they determined as a body to approach Akbar on the subject.

Now there lived a famous musician of the name Tansen* who had earned for himself many titles and a great reputa-

* There were thirty-six principal musicians in Akbar's court. Miyan Tansen was at the head of them all. Ramchand was the patron of Tansen before he came to the Emperor's court. Most of his compositions are written in Akbar's name and his melodies are very popular in Northern India even at the present day.

tion in the courts of the various princes of Northern India. This Tansen was a believer and not an infidel like Birbal who was a Brahman and an idolater. Tansen, they said to themselves, is as great a musician as Birbal and what is more, a true Mussulman. And therefore mustering courage, they in a body petitioned the great Emperor that he would graciously be pleased to appoint Tansen in the place of Birbal and accord to him a position of greater dignity than that which Birbal enjoyed. This they said would afford incalculable pleasure to the faithful.

Not a little surprised at this strange request, Akbar remarked, "I know Tansen well, he is proficient only in music and knows next to nothing of state-craft. Nor does he possess the superior intellect of Birbal." Thus foiled in their attempt they retired from the royal presence, but

jealousy grew all the stronger in their hearts and they would not give up their attempts, to displace Birbal from Akbar's favour.

The schemers met one night in a courtier's house and the spirit of competition was very keen as to who should offer the best suggestion which would pave the way for the Hindu's ruin.

"I have arranged for a musical party in my house, to-morrow night, when Tansen will play his soul-bewitching tunes. Shall we not invite the Padshah to come and listen to Tansen and pay him his meed," said one of the number.

"Amen!" cried all, "may the Prophet come to our rescue!"

"I swear by the Beard of the Prophet," exclaimed one of the noblemen, "unless something is done to check the ascendancy of the Hindus, we the faithful shall be nowhere ere long."

So a grand musical performance was got up in the house of one of the noblemen and Akbar was present on the occasion. Tansen was at his best and the Padshah certainly expressed his admiration for the musical talents of Tansen.

“ May your majesty live long ! ” exclaimed the noble host, “ now at least you recognise the merit of Tansen, will you henceforth be pleased to make him your protege and a recipient of greater honour than Birbal ? ”

“ You are very much mistaken answered the Emperor, “ there is no comparison between Tansen and Birbal. The insignificant mosquito may as well grow jealous of the mighty elephant ! Nothing will be so absurd as raising him to the position of one of my advisers.”

But Akbar after a while thought it would be best to demonstrate to his courtiers

once for all the intellectual superiority of Birbal. He wrote two letters to the king of Burma in which he desired the bearer to be put to death. Birbal and Tansen were each given a copy of it and desired to take it to the king of Burma. Birbal was not without his misgivings. A thing like this had not occurred before, but he had done no wrong and felt sure that his knowledge of human nature and his sound common-sense would stand him in good stead even in Burma.

Birbal and Tansen started on their journey and after many difficulties reached the capital of Burma. As it was after nightfall the gates of the city were closed and the travellers had to halt at a wayside inn during the night. At day-break, they reported themselves to the officers of the king, who presented them before the king, in due time. The king when he read the epistles, was at a loss

to understand why Akbar who was reputed to be wise and just should have requested him to put to death two persons who to all appearances were quite innocent. There was no reason assigned for the visitation of such a punishment on their heads. He referred the matter to his chief minister who said it would be a good idea to put them in prison apprising them that if in a week's time they did not disclose what their offence was, they would be put to death. The king agreed to the proposal and said to Birbal and Tansen, "Well, listen to me, you men of India, your king wishes that you should be put to death. Forsooth, you have committed so heinous a crime that he does not want that even your bones should find a resting place in your native land. But I shall not have you put to death, unless I know the offence and myself deem you deserving of the punish-

ment. You shall, therefore, be allowed a week's respite in our prison to confess your offence."

Birbal bowed to the King and Tansen in whom all sense was displaced by numbing fear, simply followed suit. Then they were both led out and put in prison. Now Tansen said to Birbal that he was entirely in his hands and a clever man such as he should certainly be able to hit on some means of escape.

"Aye, escape is not impossible even at this stage," answered Birbal, "cheer up and take courage, when we are led out to be executed, let us each want to be put to death before the other. Leave the rest to me and I shall so manage that our lives are not lost."

"You will then have the thanks and blessings of my poor old mother," said Tansen.,

On the morning of the eighth day Birbal and Tansen were conducted to the place of execution and lo! the wrangling between the two men as to who should be killed first quite surprised the executioners. They thought there was something wonderful about the men and conducted them to the king's presence and represented to him their strange conduct. The King was astonished at what he heard and said, "You men of India, your fearlessness is indeed strange. Do you tell me what your offence is and I shall tender you pardon." Birbal forthwith replied, "My Lord, Akbar has grave reasons for having our present lives terminated and it behoves us not to disclose them to you."

"Fie on your madness! Why are you so foolish, it is not right that one quits a life before one has derived the full benefit that can accrue from it. Further it is

against the *dhamma** to put innocent people to death."

"I shall disclose to you the great secret," answered Birbal, "to satisfy your curiosity, but neither of us is troubled by fear of death. For a long time the ambitious *Mughal* Emperor has been filled with a desire to possess your dominions. He does not deem it however expedient to go to war with you. A wise astrologer from Benares recently disclosed to him confidentially the fruits of his researches in the lore of the stars and said that the benevolent Emperor who brought peace and plenty to the land of the sages was destined to extend his sway to the borders of the Eastern Ocean. When asked what the Padsha had to do on his part to help the fulfilment of the prophecy, he suggested our being sent to you with the epistles which we presented.

* The code of moral rules promulgated by Buddha.

He who is killed first is destined to displace you from the throne on being re-born and he who dies next will similarly become the minister. We are both his favourites and he expects us to hand over the kingdom to him."

"May Tatagato* save me from the sin of putting two innocent persons to death ! I am not a feudatory prince of the Mughal King and I am not therefore bound to carry out his orders. You men of the holy land, I declare you free to go where you like, but as long as you stay here, I shall make what reparation I can for the unkindness already shown to you."

Birbal and Tansen were the guests of the King of Burma for a few days and being properly equipped started on their homeward journey. The king made such good provision for the journey that they reached India "without much trouble.

* A name of Buddha. . . .

Tansen was afraid of showing himself to the Padsha, whereas Birbal went to him forthwith. Akbar was at the time holding a durbar and Birbal related to him what befell himself and Tansen from the day they left Delhi until they came back.

Akbar asked the Muhammadan noblemen whether they were now convinced that Birbal was far cleverer than Tansen.

“Aye, he is in worldly wisdom,” answered the most bigoted among the nobles but the idolater, unless he turns his face towards Mecca, does not deserve your favour.”

“May Allah forfend that you should embroil me with my Hindu subjects ! What right have you to dedicate to others in religious matters ? And what right have I ? A man’s religion is an affair between his own conscience and his God ! Why should I claim to guide

others before I myself am guided ? Different religions are but different paths to the same goal !”*

When the Mussulman nobility were thus admonished, there was no further cavil among them.

* Akbar's toleration is well summed up in an inscription written by Abul Fazl for one of the temples of Cashmere :

Oh God, in every temple I see people that see Thee, and in every language I hear spoken, people praise Thee. Polytheism and Islam feel after Thee.

Each religion says, Thou art one, without equal.

If it be a mosque, people murmur the holy prayer ; and if it be a Christian church, people ring the bell from love to Thee.

Sometimes I frequent the Christian cloister, and sometimes the mosque,

But it is Thee whom I seek from temple to temple.

Thy elect have no dealings with heresy nor with orthodoxy ; for neither of these stands behind the screen of Thy truth.

Heresy to the heretic, and religion to the orthodox,

But the dust of the rose-petal belongs to the heart of the perfume-seller :—“ *The Mogul Emperors*,” by E. S. Holden.

His tolerance of religion, and his abhorrence of religious persecutions, put our Tudors to shame :—Lord Tennyson in the notes to his poem of *Akbar's Dream*.

THE STORY OF THE RAYA & APPAJI

16 Amusing and Instructive Stories

BY

T. M. SUNDARAM AIYAR.

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PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION.

I have been emboldened to undertake the present translation by the success that has attended the endeavours of the learned writers who have already contributed a volume each to this series. Speaking for my own humble self, I am strongly disposed to think that there is an urgent necessity for the translations of as many as possible of popular works like the Tales of Tennalirama. The complaint has often been brought against the Hindus that they have absolutely no appreciation of humour, but a reference to the folk-lore of the country, as well as other popular tales like the present will amply refute the allegation.

A short history of the mutual relations of the two chief characters in the following tales as well as their separate histories may not be out of place. Krishna Deya or as he is popularly called the Raya was born about the year 1465 A. D. He was the son of Narasimha, a

ruler of the Vijayanagar dynasty by his second wife Nagamāmbā.

In 1509 A. D. Krishna Deva Raya succeeded to the rich dominions of his father who had added to his Vijayanagar Provinces the Districts of Madura, Tanjore, Trichinopoly and Tinnevelly. Krishna Deva was not his father's immediate successor for the dedication of a work to him says that he succeeded his brother Veera Narasimha. A story is told which speaks of an early friendship between Krishna Deva and his Minister Appaji, otherwise called Saluva Timma. The relations between the Raya and Appaji were far closer and more intimate than those of Ruler and Minister. Indeed Appaji was looked upon by Krishna Deva as his confidential friend and boon companion. Many stories are extant of Krishna Deva's getting into difficulties and perilous situations, from which he was extricated by the wit of his trusty friend and adviser. It is a historical fact that Krishna Deva was amongst the most valorous princes of his line. In the year 1516 A. D., he started on a series of

conquests as a result of which Kondavidu, Vinukonda, Bezwada, Rajahmandry and other provinces were added to his dominions. He carried his conquests as far north as Cuttack whose ruler Veerapratapa Rudra* conciliated the successful invader by offering his daughter, Tirumala Devi in marriage. Subsequently he turned his attention to the Southern country, having previously made over the Kalinga Province as far as Rajahmandry to his father-in-law, Veerapratapa Rudra, and captured Conjeevaram. For a period of three years after his conquest of Simhachalam and other Eastern parts, he does not seem to have undertaken any fresh campaigns. An almost endless list of his later victories and conquests is given ; suffice it to say that his dominions

* " Veera Pratapa Rudra Deva 1504—1532 ; reigned 28 years. A learned man, deeply versed in the shastras. His reign was disturbed by theological discussions as to the merits of the Buddhistic and Brahminical religions. The great Vaishnavite reformer, Chaitanya visited Puri during this reign and finally converted the king to the Vaidic faith. The temple of Valaha at Jaipur was constructed by this king ; and the annalists state that he extended his conquests as far as Cape Comorin." (From Mr. R. Sewell's Antiquities of Madras.)

were by no means inextensive nor his victories few. Nor was this man celebrated for his conquests alone. He took great interest in the welfare of his subjects and constructed roads and bridges throughout the length and breadth of his territories. It was he who built the bridge across the Tungabhadra near his capital Vijayanagar.

Krishna Deva was as great in peace as in war. He was a great patron of Telugu Literature and carried the title of Andhra Bhoja. He was himself a poet and some Telugu and Sanskrit compositions are ascribed to him. His Brahmin minister, Appaji was also a poet of no mean repute. It is said that *Appaji* was a pet name bestowed on Timma Arasu by Krishna Deva as a token of the protection he had received at Timma Arasu's hands when he was persecuted by his brother, Veera Narasimha. The early friendship of the two was further cemented in latter years and Appaji never lost his ruler's confidence till his death. Krishna Deva did not survive his minister, for more than three years and died in 1529 A. D.

It is hoped that in spite of the various faults and shortcomings, of which no one can be more conscious than the translator himself, the present little work will commend itself to the general reader. Before concluding, I beg to acknowledge my indebtedness to some friends who were kind enough to look through the manuscript and offer valuable suggestions.

•TIRUPATUR :
SALEM DISTRICT, }
July, 1908. }
T. M. SUNDARAM AIYAR.

THE STORY OF THE RAYA & APPAJI.

I.

HOW APPAJI BECAME THE PRIME MINISTER.

THE Raya had occasion to send for the rulers of all tributary States under his sway for consultation on some political problems. On the appointed day all of them presented themselves except one who sent his minister Appaji as his representative. As each vassal paid his homage to the mighty potentate, the Raya made kind enquiries. When Appaji's turn came, he was presented, and the Raya asked him his name. He submitted that he was called Appaji and that he came to represent his master. The Raya though offended at the absence of his vassal, put a calm face over it and directed Appaji to send for

his master. And in obedience to the mandate Appaji requested his master to come and remain in readiness at a village some four miles from the capital. Meanwhile the Raya in one of his rides happened in passing by a butcher's shop to see a butcher flaying a sheep, and quickly turning to Appaji he reminded him of his order to send for his master. Immediately Appaji wrote to his master and required him to go back at once to his capital, which he did. Some days after, while the Raya was in a gay mood, he asked Appaji if his master had been sent for and Appaji gave him a negative reply. The Raya demanded the reason for the delay, and Appaji said he would give it out if his master's safety was promised. The Raya granted his request and Appaji explained that his master had really come, but before he could pay homage to his majesty he had to be

warned to go, because the Raya was mightily displeased with him. On being questioned how Appaji had made out that, he related the incidents of the scene in the Butcher's shop and stated that he concluded therefrom that the Raya had a great mind to deal with his master as the butcher did with the sheep and so he tried to save his master. On hearing this, the Raya was astonished at Appaji's sagacity and fidelity and made him the Prime Minister at his own Court. He also rewarded the vassal king from whom he got such an able minister.

II.

STANDARD OF COMFORT AND POSITION IN LIFE.

N a-certain night it rained heavily. At day-break when the rain ceased, the Raya and his minister went for a morning stroll through the fields outside the town to inspect the floods, and admire the beauty and grandeur of the picturesque scenery around. While they were passing by a fold, they saw a shepherd soundly sleeping with his head, hip, and legs supported on rough stones, and his face covered over by a basket made of reeds, while his hair was dangling in the water that was flowing under him. Seeing this the Raya exclaimed "what is here, life or death?" Appaji said that the man was not dead, but was enjoying the sweet embraces of sleep. The Raya doubted if one could sleep so soundly on such a bed of stones in the

cold weather, with water washing his hair. Appaji explained that it all depended upon a man's position in life. The Raya with a view to verify the statement had the shepherd removed to his palace, and gradually raised him to a high position in the State, by which he was enabled to enjoy all kinds of princely comforts. One day the Raya had the path that led from the shepherd's quarters to his own palace strewn with raw plantain rinds, so that the shepherd had to walk over them to reach the palace of the king for an audience. The same day he caught cold and began to ail from fever. Now that the Raya was fully convinced of the maxim enunciated by Appaji, he had the shepherd cured by his durbar physician and thanked Appaji for his practical demonstration.

III.

LOVE IS BLIND.

None of their usual evening strolls, the Raya drew the attention of Appaji to a most ugly looking woman who was infecting the surrounding atmosphere with her nauseous breath, and asked him whether any man would think of making love to such a creature. The latter replied coolly that she too surely had her lover. But the Raya expressed his curiosity to have a look at that individual. Walking further down the street, they met a man neatly clad, with *pan supari* in his hands. Appaji observed him and found him suddenly stop by the side of the street drain and with a hasty glance on either side, take a few drops of the sewage water to wet the dry chunam on the betal leaf in his

hand. At this sight Appaji immediately exclaimed " My Lord, this is the person that you just now wanted to find." The Raya could not easily bring himself to believe that a man so finely dressed could be the lover of that ugly beast, and they tracked him till he went to the woman's house. The man suddenly made for the pial whereon she was dozing, and seating himself by her side, began to hand her betel leaves besmeared with chūnām and made love to her. This scene cleared all doubts entertained by the Raya as to the relation between the well-attired man and the ugly lady and he extolled Appaji for his keen powers of observation.

IV.

HOW TO PUNISH ONE THAT KICKED AND SPAT ON THE KING?

APPAJI, the Prime Minister of the Raya, now under the patronage of the benign ruler, grew day by day more powerful in the State, and the queen (the Raya's wife) feeling jealous of his power and influence with the king pressed upon the Raya the elevation of one of her relations to the post. When the Raya expressed doubts as to the man's attainments, she asserted that he possessed qualifications far superior to those of Appaji. Of this, the king was not convinced, but he promised to satisfy himself by some tests and the queen was quite pleased. The very day on which the promise was made, while the king was playing with his children in the

harem, his little boy kicked him and spat on his face and person, and played several other frolics with him. The next morning the Raya sent for the man recommended by the queen and enquired of him what punishment was to be inflicted upon one that kicked the king and spat on his face. The man replied without hesitation that the audacious rebel should have his legs severed immediately and his mouth gagged by molten lead being poured in. He dismissed the man and sending for Appaji he put the identical question for his solution. Appaji burst into a fit of laughter and said that a gold anklet should immediately adorn the legs which kicked his highness and the mouth that spat should be sealed with a kiss from the royal lips. The Raya then explained to his queen that the person who committed the offence for which punishment was sought was

her own child and asked her which of the punishments, the one recommended by Appaji or that recommended by her man, she would like to inflict on him. The queen, though convinced of the superiority of Appaji's wisdom, being only actuated by jealousy replied that one test was not sufficient. The Raya confident of the comparative merits of the candidates, promised her some more opportunities for testing the powers of the queen's nominee.

V.

PRAISE IN ABUSE.

SOMETIMES after, there came from the Southern Country to the Raya's Court, three nautch girls proficients in *Bharita Shastra* (dancing) and *Sangita Shastra* (music). They made an impressive display of their skill before the Raya. He was much pleased with their proficiency and gave them suitable presents and the women in expressing their thanks eulogised the king thus:—

First woman: “Hail ! King, thy heart is like the root and stem, Hail !”. Second woman: “Hail to thee ! Oh King, it is thorny and misshapen.” Third woman: “Hail, King, it is rugged and rocky.” The Raya understood the praise that lay beneath these apparently uncomplimentary words, and finding in them a

fit subject for testing the powers of the man whose cause was being so strongly espoused by the queen, he summoned him to his presence, and asked him what punishment he would recommend to the women who in open Court addressed the king with the words above referred to. And the man without the least hesitation replied that, for their impudence they deserved to be driven out of the country. The Raya dismissed the man and sent for Appaji and asked him his opinion in the same matter. Appaji replied smiling "Oh mighty Ruler, the women, should, in my opinion, be amply rewarded for their sagacity in estimating your character so correctly." But the Raya, however, wanted Appaji to explain how he construed the women's remarks into unadulterated praise. He said 'My Lord, the first woman merely told you that she so much appreciated your disposition

and found it as sweet as the root and stem of the sugarcane; the second expressed better and compared its sweetness to the honey in the jack fruit, the best of all fruits, though externally thorny and misshappen; and the third compared your nature to the sweet sugar candy which is rocky and rugged in appearance. In fact what they said are all really praises showered upon you." The Raya became overjoyed and turning aside to his queen, asked her what she thought of her protege's capacities as compared with those of Appaji. As is generally the case with women, she would not see the real facts and persisted that further tests should be in some State missions requiring greater exhibition of tact and judgment.

VI.

THE ROYAL GIFT OF THE POT-PUMPKIN, MOVING CABBAGES, AND PIT-WELLS.

THE fame of Appaji spread far and wide and reached even the ears of the great Delhi Padsha. Growing desirous of testing Appaji's keen insight, his powers of observation, and shrewdness of wisdom, he intended on the Raya for a pot-pumpkin, some moving cabbages, and a pit-well within a month. The Raya was non-plussed and consulted Appaji. Appaji came to the Raya's rescue and said that they could be found in no time, and hastened home devising plans on his way. He let into a pot a young pumpkin and allowed it to grow and ripen within the pot. He also filled a country cart with earth and sowed

seeds of cabbages in it. The seeds took root and grew in profusion. A week before the appointed time, he advised the Raya to send the things to the Sultan. As for the pit-well, the Padsha was to be informed, that as it was a strange creation, it could not be sent singly to a foreign land unless the Padsha would be able to send one from his own country to keep company with it during the journey)*. The Raya was very much delighted at the suggestion and acted up to his advice. The Padsha on receipt of the pot-pumpkin and the moving cabbages was much pleased with Appaji's shrewdness and henceforth had a higher regard for him.

* This request of Appaji is founded on a common practice prevailing in S. India, of mating a restive bullock with a quiet animal, in one yoke, as otherwise the former could not journey to its destination by itself.

VII.

THE IDOLS DIFFERENTIATED.

THE Delhi Padsha* not satisfied with a single trial in testing Appaji's ability, had recourse to another device. He had three idols of identical size and shape made by a skilful sculptor and sent them to the Raya, requiring him to examine them and report which of them was good, which bad and which indifferent. The Raya received the Emperor's message and had it read with due regard in the presence of his Council; everyone in the Council carefully scrutinized the idols, but all were quite puzzled at finding the idols being completely alike in size, shape, the quality of the metal etc. . . and could not point out any difference in their make. At last

* The Padshas of Delhi referred to in these tales, seem to have been the weak Muhammadan rulers of the Sayyid and Lodi dynasties, whom Krishna Deva Raya formally acknowledged as the nominal suzerain.

Appaji was consulted. He requested the Raya to allow him a day's time. The next day, he submitted to the Raya that he had solved the problem and differentiated the idols according to the qualities by distinguishing subtle marks thereon. The Raya who was all admiration for Appaji's sagacity for such puzzles requested him to explain the process of the solution. He then told the king that on a minute inspection of the limbs of the idols, he found that each of them had a small hole in one of their ears. Concluding that the hole should be the clue for distinguishing one from the other, he inserted a thin bit of wire into the ear in which he caught sight of the hole in each of them. In one the wire came out by the mouth, in another it came out by the other ear, and in the third it did not. He accordingly classified them as follows. The last one represented a

man who would keep to himself what he heard from others and was therefore the best ; the idol which allowed the wire to pass through its other ear represented the man who would forget at once what he took from others and therefore typified the indifferent nature of the man ; and the idol which gave the wire a free passage through the mouth was the worst as it represented the garrulous man who made it his business to sow broadcast everything the moment he heard from others. After explaining the details of his scrutiny, Appaji asked the Raya to return the idols with their natures stamped on their respective backs. The Raya's joy knew no bounds and under Appaji's instructions he sent them at once to the Padsha of Delhi. The Sultan on receiving the idols sent back by the Raya with Appaji's solution, was much struck with the minister's keen powers of observation and deduction and thanked the Raya for his kindness.

. VIII.

HOW THE ARMY UNDER THE SULTAN'S VIZIER WAS ROUTED.

 N a stormy day a rough and haughty Mussalman was sheltering himself from the rain on the pial of a house, when there came and sat by his side a consumptive old man. The latter frequently coughed and the Mussalman could not tolerate it. He warned the old man to cease coughing, but he could not. Growing very wroth, the Mussalman drew out his sword and chopped off the head of the old man. Incensed at this open cold-blooded murder, the neighbours caught hold of the Mussalman and took him to the Raya for condign punishment. The Raya, in trying, asked him why he had cut off the old man's head. The Muhammadan replied un-

dauntedly "Sire, the old man" persisted in coughing, in spite of my repeated warnings, and unable to put up with it I quickly despatched him to the other world." On hearing his words, the Raya could not forbear a laugh at the man's irritable temper and foolhardiness, and consulted Appaji as to the sentence to be awarded. Appaji chuckled to himself and suggested that no heavier punishment need be meted out to him than mere surveillance and sumptuous feeding with a daily supply of two seers of flesh, a seer of ghee seasoned with other necessary perquisites, and added that his services would be in requisition some day. The Raya who had complete confidence in Appaji's wisdom directed that the instructions should be strictly followed. Sometime after, the Delhi Padsha expressed in his durbar, one day, that the Raya though a vassal, was very slow in

obeying his orders and quite unpunctual in paying his tribute, and this, the Padsha thought, was due to the Raya having Appaji as his adviser. He therefore asked if any of his courtiers was able to vanquish the Raya by any means foul or fair. One of them stood up and offered his services to that end. The Sultan sent him with a large and mighty army under his command. The minister encamped in the vicinity of the Raya's capital and sent an ambassador to the Raya's Court to announce his arrival. The Raya found himself in great perplexity and informed Appaji that the Sultan's minister had come with an overwhelming army and that this particular vizier was devilishly artful in his ways and a monster in cruelty. The Raya feared that his arrival boded him no good and asked Appaji to give his best advice. Appaji at once sent for the rude Mussal-

man who was being fattened at the Raya's expense, and requested the king to send through him, a humble epistle to appease the irate minister. In it he had to admit his vassalage to the Emperor, as well as his own insignificance as compared with the Sultan, and submitted at the same time that he would readily pay the tribute whenever demanded. The Muhammadan took the letter to the minister and handed it to him. The minister read the letter and blaming himself for leading such a great army against this fit-for-nothing coward, spat on the floor as if in contempt for the Raya's abject submission. The Mussalman took it to be an insult to himself and drew out the sword from its sheath and in a flash the vizier was cut into two. The soldiers who were close by dealt with the rude Muhammadan likewise. When the Commander was killed, disorder arose in

the army's ranks and it fled in all directions. The Raya came to know of the fate on the Sultan's army and, was very much pleased with Appaji for his sagacity by which he was able to kill two birds with one stroke. Both the irate minister and the haughty Mussalman were cleared of to the best advantage of the State.

IX.

HOW APPAJI RESCUED THE RAYA.

THE news of the defeat of the ill-fated army reached the ears of the mighty Sultan. Every attempt of the Padsha to overthrow the Raya proved ultimately unsuccessful. He now determined to take out his life by employing some foul means, as his efforts to conquer him in open battle were ineffectual, so long as Appaji lent him a helping hand. Hence he sent a thousand well-armed cavaliers in the guise of horse-dealers with instructions to capture the Raya's person. Arriving at the capital, they announced themselves as merchants from Northern India, and that they came there to solicit the Raya's favour and patronage. The Raya promised to patronize them, and one evening went to their camp with a few horse-experts and held an inspection of the horses. The

leader of the group informed his majesty that each horse was worth a thousand mohurs and that, as all of them were equally good, and trained alike, his majesty was at liberty to choose any one of them and make a trial ride on it, while the other horsemen would keep pace with him. The Raya, acquiescing, mounted on a horse and spurred it to high speed; the other riders got upon their respective horses and followed the Raya's suite. When they reached the fourth milestone from the city, the disguised emissaries of the Sultan captured the person of the Raya and carried him off a prisoner to the Delhi Padsha's presence.* Appaji

* The incidents of this story seems to have a historical basis, although wrongly attributed to the Raya, inasmuch as we find a similar story now current among the South Indian populace, which relates how Pratapa Rudra, the King of Warangal (Woragallu in Telugu) was carried off a prisoner to Delhi in 1323 A.D., and how his minister Yagandhar effected the King's escape by having recourse to a similar stratagem. (Vide Pandit Venkataraya Sastri's Pratapa Rudriya Natakam in Telugu).

soon came to know of the Raya's fate and regretting the king's indiscretion in relying on the words of the bogus traders, vainly cast about in his mind, for a device to rescue the Raya from the clutches of the Sultan. At last he hit upon a plan and disguising himself as a lunatic, he arrived at Delhi, the Padsha's capital, and began roaming about in the streets crying at the highest pitch of his voice that he was the irrepressible Appaji himself. He gave out that he had come to rescue the Raya and carry off the Sultan as captive. While Appaji was thus wandering, in the guise of a maniac, through every quarter of the city, the Delhi Padsha had occasion to hear him utter some meaningless words, and eager to ascertain if he was really mad, ordered his sentries to dog his footsteps and locate his residence where he cooked his meal. The disguis-

ed Appaji, as usual, repaired to the burning ground at midnight and kindling a fire out of the smouldering embers and half-burnt faggots, put the rice in a vessel, set it upon the fire, and began to cook his day's meal. In the meantime, he found to his utter surprise that he had been often and often yawning and as yawning* would result only when there was a cause for excitement or wonder concluded that sentries should have been watching him all the while. Quick as thought, he dashed the cooking utensil and its contents against a stone, and ran off like a madman raving and ranting. The sentries who had been all the while observing him from behind, reported to their sultan what had happened. The

* The idea of yawning is suggestive of the fact that there is no effect without a cause. The same idea expressed in the Telugu proverb, *Vintalenī Avrlintha Puttadu* (no yawning without excitement) and in the Tamil *Yaro Ninaikkinran* (some body thinks of him) usually uttered when any man or woman has something stick in the throat.

curious behaviour of Appaji went to confirm the Sultan's belief that he was only a madman after all.

Meanwhile Appaji sent an order to his compeers to fit out a vessel laden with valuable precious stones and start for the nearest sea-port from the Sultan's capital. His compeers clearly understood the gist of the order and as per instructions, they took a ship laden with diamonds and emeralds, and presenting themselves before the sultan, made a display of their wares. The Sultan was struck with the beauty of the dazzling diamonds and offered a high price for them. The merchants demanded a price more than what they were really worth, and asserted that the proper person to estimate the value of the diamonds was the Raya himself and he alone could do that. The Sultan admitted the well-known fact and expressed his desire to

see all the varieties of stones they had with them. The merchants invited the Padsha to pay a visit to their ship where, in the show-room, he could conveniently examine the stones to his heart's content and make his own selection out of them. The next day, the Sultan paid a visit to their ship, as requested, taking with him the captive Raya and some stone-experts. Appaji transported with joy at the success-to-be of his plan, hurried to the deck and began to shriek and yell out as before. This was intended to be a signal for Appaji's men to steer the ship from the port, with the Raya and the Sultan aboard the craft. The signal was understood, and immediately the anchor was lifted up and the sails were hoisted. The ship reached the coast skirting the Raya's dominions and the Raya took the Sultan and his attendants to his palace where they remained as the Raya's state guests.

for some time. The Sultan finally discovered how he fell unwarily into the trap set for him by Appaji, and could not but express his delight, (much to his chagrin) at the shrewdness of the Raya's minister. He assured the Raya that he would no longer interfere with his affairs and then took leave of the king and started for Delhi. At his departure, the joy of the Raya knew no bounds and he embraced Appaji and candidly avowed that he was, indeed, a God-send to him.

X.

THE SEVEN CURIOS.

ONE day, the Raya sent for his Prime Minister Appaji and asked him if he could procure the following seven* curios *viz.*, the learned fool, a trusted servant, a saintly harlot, a harlot-like wife, a vagrant dog, an ass among men, and a buffalo that sat on a throne. Appaji promised to get them, and went to a neighbouring country in quest of the curios. He entered a city and on his way met a pandit of local fame. He entrusted to his care a thousand gold mohars with a request that he should return them when required. He then entered the house of a dancing girl and

* "Seven" is one of the mystic numbers in whose influence the Hindus have much faith, just as "forty" is a sacred number among the Mussalmans. (Cf. *Mandala* and *Muharram*.)

asked her if she would take him in for the night. She demanded a thousand mohars and Appaji coolly paid her the amount and informed her that he would go to her in the evening. When night set in, he went to her and told her that he would kill her after keeping company with her. True to her lover, she told him that as she received a thousand mohars from him and sold herself for the night to the man who paid the amount, he could deal with her as he pleased. Appaji quite satisfied with her fidelity, assured her that he would see her the next day, and left the place after throwing some bits of sweetmeat to the dog at the harlot's doorway. As he was crossing the king's highway, the princess saw him from her balcony and fell in love with him. She ran to her father and told him of her love for the man, and desired him to give her away in marriage to the man

the loved. • The king sent for Appaji and married him to his daughter. In the princess's chamber, Appaji put her the same query as he did to the dancing girl. This was too much for the princess and she at once reported to the king her husband's conduct. The king consulted his prime minister and he suggested that Appaji deserved to be decapitated at once without any trial. The king passed a death sentence on Appaji and handed him over to the hangman's custody. On his way to the place of execution, Appaji entreated the hangman to allow him a chance of speaking to the king in person. But the hangman was not moved to pity and he went on dragging him most mercilessly. As Appaji passed by the house of the pandit, he asked him to return his money. But the pandit finding him in sore straits, flatly denied ever having seen him or received any money from him. When

he entered the lane where the harlot was residing, the dog recognised him and ran into the house and brought back her mistress to the street. The dancing girl saw Appaji's predicament and tipping the hangman a hundred mohars, she requested him to delay his execution, and went to the king and pleaded that Appaji should be heard in person. The king took her suggestion, and sent for the condemned man and asked him to give an account of himself. Appaji said that the far-famed Raya sent him in search of seven curios and he was very fortunate in that he found them all in the king's city, and he wanted the king's permission to inform the Raya of his success. The mere mention of the Raya's name was sufficient to send a thrill into the king's heart, and afraid of incurring the mighty ruler's displeasure he sent Appaji to his country with all royal honours as befitting him.

On his arrival, Appaji gave out a graphic account of the incidents of his travels, and asked the Raya to send for the persons named by Appaji from the king down to the hangman. When they were brought before the Raya, he asked Appaji to explain the nature of the seven curios he had secured. Appaji stepped forward and began "Your Highness! the man that now stands before you is a pandit of great renown. Yet in spite of his learning, he contrived to deprive me of my money entrusted to his care, at a time when my life was in peril. So I call him a learned-do-nothing. This dog of the harlot, though it has eaten only a few bits of my sweetmeats, yet out of gratitude, has helped me in time of need. So I take him for a trusted servant. The dancing girl now before your majesty, a harlot as she is by profession, is a saintly being inasmuch as she saved

me from an ignoble death. This princess, well qualified as she is for a domestic life, has brought me into trouble, without being true to her husband. Hence she may be called a harlot-like wife. This hangman turned a deaf ear to my appeals, but on being bribed by the harlot he let me off. So he is no better than the street dog. The vizier, an exalted being as he is, sentenced me to death without considering for a moment the propriety of giving me an opportunity to explain myself and in my opinion he deserves to be styled an ass among men. The king has no common sense to discern things right or wrong, and as such I call him "a buffalo on the throne." Appaji's explanation was received with loud acclamations of joy and the Raya appreciated him all the more for his wisdom and shrewdness.

XI.

"CARE KILLS A MAN".

A NOTHER day, as the Raya was returning with Appaji from his evening stroll, he observed a well-built young man who was passing along, backing an elephant that was just returning from the river. The man stood in front of the animal and pushed it back by the tusks. For him it was mere play costing no effort. The Raya was much surprised to see him display his vast physical strength and asked Appaji if it was possible for any man to develop such powers. Appaji readily replied that such sportive tendencies and extraordinary powers were due to the man's leading a life free from cares and anxieties. But the Raya in spite of his faith in Appaji's words wanted him

to prove his statement. And Appaji assured him that he would show the king that the same young man would avoid the elephant when he happened to meet it next time. The Raya agreed, and Appaji sent for the youth's mother, a widow, and asked her what her son was doing. She replied that, as he was her only son, she did not want to give him any cause for anxiety in the way of earning a livelihood and that she took especial care to conceal from him all kinds of want. When Appaji heard this, he told her that it was not conducive to his welfare to allow him to idle away his time and lead an easy life. He recommended that she should gradually make him understand the details of house-keeping. To gain this end he suggested that she should tell him, when he came for his evening meal, that the supply of salt had run

short and that unless he procured it, he would have to take his next day's breakfast without salt. The innocent widow thanked Appaji for his advice and when she asked her son to get some salt for the next day, he was taken aback and had to think out the ways and means for procuring it. That evening, as the youth was listlessly walking in the street, all the while casting about for a solution of the salt problem, the Raya observed him and stood in a corner to see how he would behave towards the elephant. As usual, the elephant returned just after sunset, and the youth who used to sport with the biggest of the tuskers by habit rushed towards it. The elephant at first shied at him, but it soon felt his powers unequal and at once it whirled its trunk around him, and threw him out of its way. The Raya who perceived this sudden change in the strength of the

youth, asked Appaji how it was possible for the young man to have lost 'all his vigour in a single day. "My Lord," said Appaji, with a smile "it is all care and anxiety and a care-worn man sows despair in all ages," and then related the incidents as he had arranged. The Raya sent for the widow to corroborate the statements of Appaji and he extolled him to the skies for his ready wit and imagination. At the suggestion of Appaji, he also arranged for the widow and her son being provided with their future necessities of life.

XII..

A QUESTION OF INTERPRETATION.

— (FIRST VARIANT.) .

 WHILE the Raya and Appaji were out *shikaring* one morning, they saw a man ploughing his field and three maidens closely watching him. One of them said that it was fit for the face, another pronounced it fit for the mouth and the third deemed it fit for the offspring. The Raya was unable to make out anything out of the remarks of the women and asked Appaji to explain what these expressions meant. Appaji said that the maidens were remarking about the soil and that the first woman, when she pointed out that it was fit for the face, merely wanted to convey the idea that the soil was suited

to the cultivation of turmeric* ; the second woman, who observed that it was fit for the mouth, wanted to suggest that the soil was better suited to the cultivation of betel leaves† ; the last woman, who decided it in favour of offspring,‡ rightly set apart the land for maintaining a nursery for rearing young cocoanut trees. The Raya at once sent for the three maidens whose choice expressions delighted him much and asked them what they meant. When he found Appaji's explanation quite convincing, he praised him for his shrewdness in understanding things apparently meaningless.

* The turmeric or saffron powder is used by Hindu ladies as a toilet for the face.

† The betel leaves are considered a delicacy by the Hindus and the Malays and they are chewed immediately after every meal with areca-nut and chunam.

‡ The word "Pillsi" in Tamil signifies a child and it is also used technically to denote the young one of a squirrel, a parrot or a mungoose, as well as a young cocoanut tree.

XIII.

EVERY ONE JUDGES THE WORLD BY ONE'S OWN STANDARD.

ONE day while the Raya was having a shave, he questioned the barber as to the material condition of his subjects. The barber replied with a smile he could scarcely suppress that the subjects were all in prosperous circumstances and even the poorest man was the proud owner of a ball of gold of the size of a lemon. The Raya was surprised at such a sweeping statement and asked Appaji to verify it. Appaji promised to investigate the matter and he quickly went to the barber's lodgings and found in his dressing bag a ball of gold of the size of a lemon. He pocketed it and left the house unnoticed. He told the Raya that he had made careful investigation into the

matter and that before giving out the results of his enquiry, he wanted the Raya to take the opinion of the barber, once more, on the same question. The next morning, when the barber opened his bag for sharpening his razors, he found that his ball of gold had been stolen and began making a vigorous search for it. He had to go rather late to the Raya's presence. The Raya feigned indifference and as the barber went on shaving, he continued the conversation of the previous day and sounded him on the then economical condition of his subjects. The barber grew a bit nervous, and with a sigh told the Raya that he was misled as to the real state of affairs in the country, and avowed that every individual subject of the king had his own miseries and cares. The Raya could not reconcile the two views of the barber, and told Appaji the gist of his conversa-

tion with his hair-dresser. Appaji burst into a fit of laughter and stated the methods adopted by him, for the change in the opinion of the barber. He then convinced the Raya of the truth of the maxim that one judges the world by one's own standard. The Raya could not but admire the judicious instincts of his minister, and as desired by Appaji, the barber was sent for and his life's savings were returned to him.

XIV.

THE LEARNED FOOLS.

HERE came to the Raya's Durbar, five Brahmin scholars, who devoted all their life-time to some special subjects in which they attained great proficiency. The group consisted of a logician, a grammarian, a musician, an astrologian and a physician. They displayed their mastery in their respective subjects and the Raya was much pleased with them. But, Appaji expressed that he had doubts if they were as equally conversant with worldly matters as they were with their subjects. Just to test their merits, Appaji suggested that they might be asked to cook their meal and enjoy a hearty dinner before they were dismissed with suitable presents. Accordingly, they were shown a spacious house

neatly furnished, where they were to prepare their meal, and Appaji sent a servant to keep a watch over their movements. The logician went to the bazaar to purchase ghee and on his way home a doubt as to whether the ghee or the cup supported the other crossed his mind. In spite of all his pros and cons, he could not come to any conclusion and as he just entered his lodgings, an idea of deciding the question by a direct experiment suggested itself and he overturned the cup with its contents. As the ghee spilt on the floor, he concluded that the cup supported the contents and went in thoroughly satisfied with the experiment. The grammarian, who volunteered himself to procure curds, could not tolerate the curd-woman's unnecessary lengthening of the vowel sound in the Tamil word *Thayir-ō* against all rules of grammar, and falling out with her, he

returned to his quarters, * wiser, but a sadder man. The musician, who assumed the role of a cook, squatted before the oven and as the rice in the pot began to boil he commenced beating time to the sound of the boiling rice. But the boiling rice had its own way and the musician soon lost his temper and broke the pot to pieces. The astrologian, who was asked to prepare leaf-dishes to serve food on, just climbed a banyan tree (*Ficus Indica*), when, to his misfortune, he heard a lizard "click, click *" above his head. He was half-way then, and taking it to mean a bad omen, he got down from the tree, when, again he heard another lizard's "click" from the opposite direction. At this stage, the astrologian could neither

* The Hindus consider the interpretation of omens, viz., the ticking of a lizard, the howling of a jackal, the braying of an ass, as a branch of the science known as Astrology. Even to this day, the belief in omens has a strong hold on the credulity of the people especially in villages and country towns.

climb up the tree nor get down from it, and at last finding it was getting late, returned home a sorry being. The physician, who undertook to buy vegetables, began to consider the therapeutic value of every vegetable in the stall and finally discarding them all, left the market without buying any vegetables. It was noon by the time all the five scholars met again together, without any signs whatever, even of a probability, of any sort of preparation for their repast. They cursed the day and sadly bemoaning their lot, tried their utmost to make the best use of the things at their disposal. Appaji who was informed by his servant, of the comic scene at the kitchen, sent word to them to appear before the Raya. The scholars came, starving and dejected. The Raya could not but pity the unhappy condition of the scholars and advising them to be better-informed in matters

directly concerning the world, sent them away to their native country, with a present of a hundred and sixteen* each.

* "One hundred and sixteen" known as the "Nuta Padaharu" in Telugu was the name given to a kind of present usually awarded to great scholars by the ancient Hindu Rajas. It consisted of (1) a sum of 116 Rupées in cash, (2) a pair of Shawls, (3) a couple of Thodas (gold wristlets).



XV.

A QUESTION OF INTERPRETATION. (SECOND VARIANT.)

ONE day, while the Raya was hunting in a neighbouring forest, he grew much tired, as the day was hot, and resorted to the bank of a placid stream near by, and just reclined under the cool shade of a banyan tree. He saw three young girls passing by and heard them exclaim "legs and twigs"; "leaf and feather," and "beak and fruit." The Raya could not understand the meaning of these expressions, and when he returned to his palace, he sent for his councillors and offered this enigma for solution. It was too much for their attainments and they solicited Appaji's favour. Appaji said that the expressions of the travellers

referred to a parrot perched upon the banyan tree under which his majesty was taking rest, and that one of the girls compared the legs of the parrot to the twigs of the tree; the second, likened the feathers of the bird to the leaves; and the third, the beak of the bird to the fruit. The Raya thanked Appaji for his masterly exposition.

XVI.

A CASE OF IDENTITY.

THE Padsha of Delhi issued orders to Raya to the effect that his Prime Minister should be immediately sent to his presence. Before Appaji could arrive at his palace, the Padsha had recourse to a stratagem by which he wanted to mislead him. He ordered one of his courtiers to put on the Emperor's garb and take his seat on the throne, while the Sultan disguising himself as the vizier, joined the ranks of the courtiers. The Raya's minister Appaji announced himself and was admitted into the Sultan's durbar. Appaji just stood before the Sultan who was in the guise of a courtier and made his obeisance. The Sultan was not a little perplexed and

could not but express his wonderment at Appaji's keen perception and asked him how he made him out as the Padsha. Appaji said, that since all the eyes of those present in the durbar were directed toward the Padsha, he understood that a ruse had been played upon him and that the bogus vizier was the Sultan himself and that the pretended Sultan was only a courtier after all. The Sultan was immensely pleased with Appaji's explanation and sent him home with royal honours. The Sultan henceforth determined that he should not interfere with the Raya's internal affairs, convinced, as he was, of the fact that so long the services of Appaji were entertained by the Raya, he would not get even a little of the tribute from him.

THE END

The Son-in-Law Abroad

And Other Indian Folk-Tales of Fun, Folly,
Cleverness and Humour

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INTRODUCTION.

JUDGED by the uniformly sorry figure he cuts in folklore, the new-made son-in-law would seem to be about the most maligned member of Indian households, all sorts of oddities, awkwardness and stupidity being mercilessly piled on his devoted head. A good many of the popular tales of country turn upon his intercourse with the bride's family. His initial visits to them are matters of absorbing interest, to which days and nights of anxious thought are devoted. Owing to a very natural desire on the groom's part to be thought well of in every respect, diverse innocent deceptions are resorted to, to make things look less ugly or more imposing than they are, while from the standpoint of the bride's family,

the son-in-law is looked upon as "fair game" and is the object of much fun and practical joking, albeit his reception and entertainment are on a loving and right royal scale.

The custom among well-to-do people is to specially invite the new bridegroom to spend a few days with them, on each Dipavali, Pongal, Kerthigai and Avani Avittam festival, for at least five successive years, and much jollification ensues. Being still somewhat of a stranger, his appearance and manners from a never-ending subject of amusing criticism and innocent chaffing on the part of his brothers and sisters-in-law, and when he happens to be country born and his wife's family city-people, his credulity is freely played upon, and much unmerited stupidity laid to his account.

In this character, he is the favourite hero of many a folk-tale, and supplies the

place in the vernacular literature, of such types as have been immortalised in the *Pickwickians* of Dickens, *Handy Andy* of *Samuel Lover*, and *Verdant Green* of *Albert Smith*.

The other tales in this selection are equally amusing, and may also interest the foreign reader, as partly lifting the veil from the domestic life of the Indians and as bringing into light the existence of curious customs and observances.

P. R.



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THE SON-IN-LAW ABROAD.

HE WEEPS OVER HANDWRITING.

 Son-in-law whose pursuit of literature had been suddenly arrested at a nodding acquaintance with "large hand" letters, chanced to be on a visit to his wife's parents—when both the head of the family and his eldest son were absent on business in a distant part of the country. For several days, no letters had arrived from the absentees, and the family was in a state of great anxiety in regard to their health and welfare—the more so as an epidemic of a virulent type was reported to be raging in the part of the country whither their business had called them.

One morning, after a long interval of silence, the postman's welcome rat-tat was heard at the door, and the letter received was put into the hands of the son-

in-law, who being the only male member of the household, was alone likely to be able to read and explain the contents.

No sooner did the son-in-law open the letter, and bestow a glance at the handwriting inside, than he burst forth crying, and, at sight of this, the rest of the family concluding that the letter conveyed tidings of some evil that had happened to the absentees, followed suit—and the whole house was soon in an uproar. Neighbours were attracted by this general lamentation, until at last one of them, to make sure what the commotion was about (for no one could tell him) snatched the letter out of the son-in-law's hand, and on reading it, found to his surprise, that it conveyed news of the welfare of the absentees, of the successful termination of their business, and the probability of their early return. There was absolutely nothing in it to

warrant such unrestrained grief. The matter was explained to the women-folk of the house, who referred to the still weeping son-in-law as the cause of their grief, while the latter, to whom no amount of persuasion could bring any comfort, nor stem the flowing tide of his sorrow, pointed to the initial "A" of the missive. He bemoaned its cruel fate, and exclaimed, between his sobs "Has it come to this, my old friend? How they must have starved and stinted you to make you turn so small as almost to be invisible. When I first made your acquaintance at school, you were as big as the whole slate upon which I wrote you. To think that they should have so ill-treated you that you have grown smaller than a fly!" It thus turned out that the son-in-law could not even spell words, and only had a dim conception of the size of letters in large hand copy while his

intellect was equally poor, as it led him to fancy that the attenuated appearance of the letter in the missive was due to its having been deprived of needful nourishment. And one and all blessed the son-in-law that, thank God, it was no worse.



2. *HE SETS THE HOUSE ON FIRE.*

THE following story relates apparently to antediluvian and pre-historic times: to an age, in short, when lamps and wicks were still novel luxuries, which had "just come out" and had not been brought into general use, at least, in rural tracts. A veritable Verdant Green of a son-in-law of this antiquated period and from up-country was on a visit to his wife's parents in the city. He gazed with silent wonder at the lights which were lit in the house after sun-down, and which rendered night as bright as noon-day. He questioned his mischievous imp of a brother-in-law what these little glimmering things were, and was banteringly answered that they were younglings of the sun which were procured with considerable difficulty from beyond the seas, and reared with great care. They were

well worth the trouble, said he, seeing the immense benefit they conferred on their owners. The rash boy knew not that his brother-in-law was so dense that he would swallow as gospel truth all that he had been told, and he also forgot that he was living in a thatched house, and failed to foresee the possible consequences of his mischievous joke. The son-in-law was so enamoured of these "solar younglings," that he desired to possess himself of one, at any cost. Accordingly, when everybody had retired to rest and the house was perfectly quiet and buried in deep slumber, he got out of his bed, walked on tiptoe to the solitary lamp in the room, and taking a burning wick, concealed it in the roof of the house, thinking to carry it home, unperceived, on the following day. Needless to say, the whole house was soon in flames, and all the inmates

were aroused. Their first thought was to rescue out of the burning pile as much as possible of all that was valuable ; and while every soul in the house was thus busily occupied, the Son-in-law was not long in tumbling out of bed. He also began poking here and there into the burning thatch overhead. Being questioned what it might be that he was looking for, he naively replied that he had hidden a "solar youngling" in the roof, and that that was what he was looking for. He thus became an object of universal indignation, and was anathematized as the idiotic author of the conflagration.

3. HE BELABOURS HIS WIFE.

IT happened once to an absent-minded son-in-law, who had a peculiar habit of forgetting the names of things, to arrive at his mother-in-law's house alone on his return from a journey, and unaccompanied by his wife. He was, as usual, made much of, and feasted right royally. Several curious confections, cakes, pies, and puddings were prepared and served up for his special delectation. Of all these tempting viands, he appreciated best a kind of sandwich, a culinary delicacy he had not tasted before and thinking to make his wife cook this preparation at home, he learnt its name. Lest his memory should play him false ere he reached home, he further resolved never to let the name go out of his mind, but kept continually repeating and muttering " sandwich " all the way home.

Arriving at a narrow stream that lay across the road, he saw a number of boys jumping clear across it, with the unmeaning cry of "Hatheri Pacha." No sooner did this reach the son-in-law's ears, than it dislodged his gastronomic reminiscence clean out of his head, and he took up in its place the cry of "Hatheri Pacha," and went home with it on his lips.

Arrived at his house, he told his wife what a savoury and nice "Hatheri Pacha" had been cooked for him by her mother, and called upon her forthwith to prepare one. Of course, there was no such thing as "Hatheri Pacha" in the culinary vocabulary of any language, and the wife professed her ignorance of what he meant, and begged him to explain. The son-in-law thought he was being made a fool of by the very wife of his bosom, and began to beat her black and blue, upon which she pointed to the swellings on

her body and asked her irate lord whether it was right to beat her into "sandwiches" all over. "Ah!" said our hero, "sandwiches it is. That is the very thing I wish you to cook for me," as the forgotten word was recalled to his memory by his wife's allusion to the marks he had inflicted on her body..

—:o:—

4. HE DROWNS HIS MOTHER-IN-LAW.

A Husbandman not overburdened with intelligence, was returning home from the fields one hot afternoon. He had been reaping and had secured his sickle beneath his waist-string. He found the blade of the sickle burn his skin owing to long exposure in the sun, and his stupid brain at once concluded that his sickle had been seized with fever, and he went about howling for a remedy. A kind *samaritan*, who was passing by, and who gauged the clodhopper's profound ignorance, took him to the riverside and made him fling the sickle into the water. On taking it up again he, of course, found it perfectly cool, and thanking his friend for the kind lesson, went away deeply pondering over it. Arrived at home, he learnt from his wife that his mother-in-law lay in a burning fever and that some-

thing should be done at once. He be-thought him of the wonderful "water cure" of the sickle, and both husband and wife carried the poor dying woman to the well and threw her plump down into it. With the rude shock of the descent, and of the cold plunge, the old lady gave up the ghost, and lay with upturned face and a ghastly grin. Our hero concluded that his treatment had been attended with marvellous success, so much so, that the old lady was actually laughing over her remarkable recovery. "Laugh away mother-in-law mine," exclaimed he, "well may you smile, now that the fever has left you!"

5. A VISIT IN BORROWED CLOTHES.

ASon-in-law, on his initial visit to his wife's family for the Pongal feast after his marriage, chose for his bestman (மாப்பிள்ளைத்தெழுஞ்) a person of a rather dense understanding. It so happened that, owing to the poverty of his own wardrobe, the former had to hire a smart turban for the occasion from the village washerman. To prevent, however, the *contre-temps* of its leaking out through the stupidity of his bestman, that he was visiting his relatives in borrowed clothes, it was deemed prudent to admonish and caution the bestman that he was on no account to divulge to their relatives the fact that the grand turban the son-in-law was wearing had been hired for the occasion. This lesson was so well instilled, and hammered into his head to such good purpose, that he could hardly say any-

thing else by way of reply to questions with which the relatives greeted the party about the welfare and prosperity of the family of their son-in-law. This strange allusion, throughout the best man's talk, to the son-in-law's turban, and his ceaseless asseveration, in season and out of season, that he could personally vouch for the fact that the turban was his own absolute property, whatever might be said of the rest of his clothing, created a suspicion in the minds of the hosts who, after watching their guests closely, soon arrived at definite conclusions. The cat having thus escaped out of the bag, the son-in-law returned home utterly discomfited.

6. THE ADVENTURES OF A MYOPIC SON-IN-LAW.

A Myopic son-in-law whose defective vision had escaped notice at the time of his marriage, was on his first visit to his wife's family for the Dipavali feast. He could see things well enough in broad daylight, his ocular defect being of that kind which is designated in Tamil (மாலைக்கண்) or "twilight blindness," that is to say, he was blind only during the dark hours. It grew dusk just as he approached the house of his father-in-law and being no longer able to find his way with certitude, and too bashful to enquire of others, he stumbled into the grain-pit attached to the house—a hollow where grain is usually stored in rural parts. As he was groping helplessly at the bottom, and making frantic efforts to reach the surface, he was espied by his brother-in-

law who kindly came to his aid, and helped him out of the hole. In explanation of his strange antics, he said that he was measuring the depth of the grain-pit to compare it with his own at home. He next encountered a sporting ram which was loosely picketed to a pillar of the house, and having fallen foul of it in his progress into the house, received a staggering blow on his knee-cap from its well-trained head, which caused it to smart with pain. The ram had his horns and ears pierced and decked for fancy's sake with iron rings, which made a clinking noise as it butted him, and the son-in-law made a mental note of this fact, for future use. As the family was assembled for the festive supper, the mother-in-law who had, in honour of the occasion, decked herself with numberless bracelets, rings and anklets, came round serving ghee, as

is usual on such occasions. As she stepped from guest to guest, the ornaments she wore produced a sound not unlike that produced by the head of the fighting ram that had hurt our hero. He, poor soul, thinking that the ram had broken loose, began to hit out right and left with his clenched fists, with the result that his mother-in-law received a smart blow on the nose and was compelled to beat a hasty and somewhat undignified retreat, in order to repair damages. Nor was this all. The crowning feat was still to come later on.

When he had retired for the night, the son-in-law confided to his wife the cause of all his troubles, and begged her to arrange some method whereby he might find his way out of, and into, the bedroom without guidance during the night, should he find occasion for going out. The wife fetched a rope of straw, and fastening one end of it to a pillar in

the yard, tied the other end to a leg of the connubial couch. Our hero found the rope useful when he went out, but on his return journey, the rope, having meanwhile been munched by the ram, was no longer available as a guide. He was, therefore, thrown upon his own devices, and unfortunately came a cropper across his mother-in-law, whose bed he had reached instead of his own. The lady thereupon set up a howl, and raised an alarm of thieves, whereupon lights were fetched, and our hero was discovered in a singular plight. His ready wit, however, did not desert him and the son-in-law scored again, for on being asked for an explanation of his behaviour, he at once replied that he had come to prostrate himself at his mother-in-law's feet, and to beg her pardon for his rude conduct at supper time.

7. THE CONVERSATIONAL SCHEME THAT FAILED.

A Son-in-law had grown stone-deaf since his last visit to his wife's parents.

He wished to pay a visit to his bed-ridden father-in-law, and at the same time to conceal his own infirmity. He accordingly hit upon a novel plan, and drew up a programme of his proposed dialogue with the patient, consisting, of set questions the probable replies to which could be guessed with tolerable certainty. "I shall begin," quoth the son-in-law to himself, "by asking the old gentleman how he feels. He will, of course, say that he is feeling a little better, upon which I shall observe that I am delighted to hear it. I will then ask him what medicine he is taking, and on getting the old man's reply, say that it is the best thing for him. I shall finally enquire who his medical attendant is, and on the old man naming some one, I will

say he could not have made a better choice.”

Having thus mentally arranged his plan of campaign, he arrived at his destination and at once began his enquiries. But our hero did not take into account that while man proposes one way, God disposes of things another way, and that it is the unexpected which always happens. To the first question, as to how he was feeling, the old man, who was decidedly growing more and more peevish, answered that he was as good as dead. The son-in-law did not, of course, catch the words, but presuming that the old gentleman was reporting an improvement, at once observed that he was delighted to hear it, a remark whose apparent heartlessness irritated the patient beyond endurance. He then enquired about the medicine prescribed, to which the irate patient replied that he was taking “brick-bats,”

and the son-in-law, as previously arranged, at once set about praising the excellent properties of so rare a medicine than which, said he, nothing was more suitable to the case. By this time, the patience of the patient had been well-nigh exhausted, but he had yet one more ordeal to undergo. "Who is your medical attendant?" quoth the son-in-law, and answer being returned, that it was Yama's Self the God of Death, to whose care he had committed himself, the son-in-law expressed his rapturous delight at so wise a choice, and added that, under the circumstances, he could hardly entertain any doubt as to the welcome result that was sure to follow. This was the last straw on the camel's back, and the patient flew into such a frenzy of rage that he even got up, and kicked his tormenting visitor downstairs. Thus it happened that a programme so masterly in its conception, proved an utter failure in execution.

8. *THE BURGLAR DISCOVERED BY HIS OWN PRECAUTION.*

A Burglar learning that the Police were in hot pursuit of him, and thinking of "any port in a storm," hid himself inside of a grain bin in his own house, after giving strict injunctions to his son—a young fellow of some half-a-dozen summers—that if any one were to question him about his whereabouts, he was not to reveal his place of concealment. The lad agreed, and no sooner had the father disappeared inside the bin, than the "bobbies" put in an appearance, and enquired for "Papa." "Papa," said the young hopeful, "is not hiding in the grain bin. You may be certain of this." The strangeness of the answer caused the Policemen to explore the bin, where they found their quarry huddled together in a heap at the bottom.

9. WINNING A FORTUNE BY PANTOMIME.

A Candidate for court favour and employment, was long waiting on a king, but without success. Having at last come to the end of his resources, he was driven to work for his daily bread, while he waited for his turn of the royal favour. One evening, as the king was driving back to the palace from one of his outings, he espied the volunteer whom he knew well by sight, employed in grinding wheat meal at a bakery. On the re-assembling of the court at night, the king noticed the candidate at his usual post, and beckoning to him made a pantomimic enquiry as to his occupation of the afternoon, by closing his right fist and moving it round and round, the meaning of which was "How is it, I found you grinding corn?" The candidate returned

answer in the same language, by first indicating his own stomach with one finger, next spreading out all his fingers and lastly holding up two of his fingers by which gestures he meant to convey that he was starving for want of food, and that he was obliged to earn a couple of annas by grinding corn. The king had no difficulty in understanding this answer but not so his courtiers, who came to the conclusion that there was some mysterious understanding between the king and this volunteer, and that they might do worse than propitiate the latter, who was evidently in the confidence of the king. They, accordingly, besieged the poor volunteer the very next day, and pressed him to detail the meaning of the strange signs he had exchanged with royalty. The volunteer saw his opportunity in this, and nothing loth to enrich himself at the expense of his credulous

visitors, explained that what the king meant by closing his right hand was that he should not disclose the royal secrets, that the circular movement of the king's hand meant an enquiry whether the volunteer had been round the country as ordered ; while, in the latter's reply, the pointing to his stomach meant that he would guard the king's secrets safe in his own bosom, that by spreading out his fingers, he meant to say, that not one of the secrets confided to him would escape his lips, while the exhibition of his two fingers meant that he would disclose everything to the king within a couple of days. The king's courtiers—who were nothing but a pack of arrant swindlers and cowards fattening on the royal revenues, which they foully misappropriated—thought over the matter, and arrived at the unanimous conclusion that some danger or risk of discovery was imminent,

and that the only door of escape open to them lay in handsomely bribing the king's confidante, and purchasing his silence. They accordingly made up, among themselves, a purse of 20 lakhs of pagodas, which they duly presented to the volunteer. The latter, thus enriched, did not allow the grass to grow under his feet, but forthwith set up a palanquin, and meeting the king on his next round of inspection, and being questioned by him about this sudden improvement in his condition, the volunteer explained everything, adding that it was all due to the royal favour, and that His Majesty's condescension in holding that pantomimic dialogue had resulted in his financial prosperity. The king was so pleased with the volunteer's resourcefulness and wit, that he forthwith appointed him a Minister of State.

10. • UNAPPRECIATED MUSIC.

THE following tale has reference to the incorrigible habit, or mannerism, of not a few vocalists and musicians, of twisting, turping, and jerking their heads and arms, by way of keeping time, when singing or playing music.

A cowherd who suddenly found himself the owner of untold wealth, which he had found hidden in his grounds, began to indulge in the fashionable amusements of the wealthy. A vocalist hearing of his munificence, waited upon him and sang to him the best songs of his repertoire. The upstart who knew nothing of music, found the songster moving his head and eyes in the most fantastic manner, and set down these extraordinary antics to his being seized with a fit of convulsions, with which he was but too familiar, as a tender of cattle. He, there-

fore, went to the inner apartments, and giving orders to have his branding irons heated, called the songster, who eagerly approached the millionaire in hopes of his reward. No sooner did the ex-cowherd catch him, than he, straightway, branded him across his forehead, neck and arms ; when, exit musician singing quite a different tune. The burns took long to heal and the vocalist thenceforward resolved to give a wide berth to all *nouveaux riches*. Some time later, a friend of the musician, who was well known at the Court of a Prince, persuaded him, much against his will, to sing to the Prince, who was an artist himself and had a fine ear for music. The Prince was rapturously delighted at what he heard, and went in to fetch suitable presents to be given to the songster, but ere he returned to his seat, the musician, who still retained a warm recollection of

the treatment that had greeted him at the cowherd's, feared a similar fate, and made himself scarce. When the matter was explained to the Prince, he expressed his deep sympathy with the vocalist, and as the latter could not be induced to return, the Prince himself proceeded to his lodgings and honored him with rare and valuable gifts.

11. *REVISED BUT NOT IMPROVED.*

A Husbandman who required a Pariah servant, engaged one who answered to the name of Perumal. He asked him to change it for some other cognomen as he was a staunch Vaishnavite, and did not appreciate the idea of shouting out to his outcast servant by so holy a name (Perumal means God Almighty). The new servant was agreeable, but explained that a ceremony would have to be undergone which would cost no end of money, some ten pagodas at the least. The master was quite willing to undergo this pecuniary sacrifice, and the sum was accordingly found and handed over to Perumal. When the servant returned after his re-baptism and presented himself before his master, the latter eagerly enquired what his new patronymic was,

and the servant innocently replied that he would henceforth answer to the name of Peria Perumal (Great Lord Almighty) —a change which, in the eyes of the husbandman, was a veritable descent from bad to worse, and he took much blame to himself for not having let well alone.

12. *THE PHYSICIAN TURNED UNDERTAKER.*

HERE is a good story of how a quack who assumed the virtue of medical knowledge but had it not was shown in his true colours. The servant of a popular medical practitioner inherited, on his master's demise, his wallet of medicines, but without any knowledge of its contents, and of their potency for good or evil. He, however, set up as a doctor on his own account, and was called in to treat a patient in the belief that his long connection with so distinguished a practitioner had doubtless qualified him to deal with the lesser ailments of humanity. The quack, who knew as much of his medicines as the receptacle which contained them, and less of the disease than the patient himself, took a handful of the topmost pills in his bag (which

happened to be purgative pills in constant demand, and hence kept at the top) and after administering them to the patient, who was already suffering from looseness, awaited developments. The pills began to operate like magic, upon a stomach already inclined to looseness, and the patient soon succumbed. The other inmates of the house were only a couple of poor females, and they begged the quack and his assistant to be so obliging as to convey the deceased to the burning ground. The latter consented for pity's sake, the quack shouldering the head of the bier, and his assistant the nether part. The strength of the purgative that had been administered was so great that it continued to operate even after life was extinct, and consequently the doctor's assistant was literally drenched with foul matter issuing out of the corpse. The poor fellow bore it all in silence, but at

the next house where the quack was called in and was about to administer his pills—the assistant stopped him, and insisted on his taking oath that, if things went wrong again, the doctor and his assistant should change places in carrying the defunct on his last journey. This strange dialogue aroused suspicions and led to an enquiry by the patient, and on the truth oozing out, he turned out the doctor and his assistant, being only too glad to see the last of them, and having no particular wish to join the majority so soon.

13. *AN INGENIOUS DEFENCE.*

A Thief climbing a cocoanut tree with felonious intent, was detected by its owner upon whose approach he quickly began to "climb down." The indignant owner demanded to know the reason of his ascent, when the thief replied that he had merely gone up in quest of grass for his starving calves. "But grass does not grow atop of cocoanut trees, you fool!" observed the owner, to which the thief answered, in language equally elegant, that it was for that very reason he was then climbing down, as any one might have noticed that was not a fool himself.

14. A RECORD-BREAKING SHREW.

A Countryman was cursed with a vixenish wife. She was, in the habit of inflicting corporal punishment on her husband, who was anything but her lord and master, at every second instance of his finding fault with her, by flinging at him whatever missile came handy,—whether a pot, chatty, or rice-pounder. He grew quite tired of this treatment, and accordingly left home on a short visit to a friend in a distant village,—but without any knowledge that his own spouse was a veritable saint in comparison with that of the friend whose society he was seeking —by way of gaining a brief spell of peace. The latter invited him home, and bade his wife serve their meals. She obeyed, but in doing so first served her own husband. No sooner did the husband mildly expostulate with her, and beg her to attend first

to their guest, than she flew into a rage and aimed at her husband's devoted head the chatty of rice she held. The dish broke into a hundred pieces, but the rim of it flew off and settled down on the neck of the guest. The latter admired the extraordinary powers of endurance with which his friend was gifted, and took his departure exclaiming, as he did so, "many are the chatties that have been shivered over my poor head by my wife, but this neat decoration by way of necklace breaks the record and beats it all hollow. It is a novel feat, unique of its kind, and well worth coming all this distance to see."

15. FEIGNING MADNESS.

A Thief lay in hiding, one night, under cover of a bean-shed, in the back-yard of a tradesman's house. The latter, however, scented him out, as he went into the yard to wash his hands and mouth, after supper, but fearing to raise an alarm without assistance at hand, he bade his wife fetch a potful of water. On its arrival, he began to rinse his mouth slowly, with the contents, spitting out the gargle, on each occasion, in a well-directed squirt at the thief that lay *perdu*. When the pot was emptied, he bade his wife fetch another potful, which he dealt with in the same way. A third and a fourth potful were thus disposed of, when the wife, surprised at this strange proceeding, questioned him about it. The husband, by way of a reply, treated her to a similar mouthful ; when the woman, concluding that her

spouse had become demented, ran and fetched a large number of the neighbours to come and help quiet him.

The latter questioned their neighbour upon his inexplicable conduct, when the supposed lunatic thus addressed them :— “Listen, friends and neighbours ! It is like this. I married this woman at five years old ; loaded her with costly ornaments, and brought her up in the lap of luxury ; gratifying all her desires without stint or measure, and yet because, forsooth, I spat one mouthful of water at her, she could not brook it, but must needs set it down to my having gone mad, and summon you to come and bind me. On the other hand, do but cast a glance at that patient gentleman behind the bean-shed (indicating the concealed thief) who, though he owes me not a single benefit, has yet contained his patience under circumstances which rendered his situation in-

tolerable, having received the contents of four large pots of water, which I have gargled and spat upon him. Ask him friends ! if you doubt my words."

The neighbours looked in the direction indicated, when they saw the thief dripping all over, and in direful plight. They at once saw through the cunning device of feigned madness which, they perceived, was a mere ruse to summon their assistance, in order to apprehend the thief and they accordingly captured him.

16. *THE NAMING OF THE
UNBORN BABE.*

ONE night, a thief, who lay perched up in the garret, was detected by the owner of the house and his wife, on the point of retiring to bed. In order to get him apprehended without giving him an opportunity of escape, they pretended not to have noticed him, and had recourse to the following artifice.

Addressing the wife, who was then in the family way, the husband asked her “supposing you bear me a daughter, what will you do in that event?” To this, the wife replied that she would have the girl named Sita, bestow all her ornaments on her, have her suitably married and get her daughter and son-in-law to make her house their home. The husband, however, pretending to disagree

with his wife, maintained that it was a son she was about to bear him, that he would have him named Rama, deck him with costly jewels and put him to school. "Should the lad," said he, "happen to be absent at meal time, I would then shout for him Rama—Rama," and suiting his action to his words, he began singing out "Rama", "Rama." Now, it so happened that the next door neighbour was the village constable or *taliari*, who answered to the name of Rama. Aroused by these cries, Taliari Raman came up with a number of the villagers. Asked why he had been summoned in the dead of night, he was told that he had not been shouted for at all, and that what he had mistaken for a summons was only part of a connubial dialogue—and in proof of this, the husband referred the assembled crowd to the man perched in the garret, who, he said, had been an attentive

listener, and had not lost a word of the whole conversation, from beginning to end. The neighbours then noticed the thief, who was hiding himself, and making him climb down, marched him off to the village chavadi (Police Station).

17. *SUMMONING THE MAGICIAN.*

THE owner of a house who was about to retire to rest for the night, found a thief concealed in the rafters.

Making believe to see if all his chests had been locked up, the owner set about fumbling among his boxes one after the other, when he, all of a sudden, withdrew his hand with a sharp shriek, screaming out that he had been stung by a scorpion. He thereupon set up a loud howl as if in agonizing pain, and this brought to the spot a neighbour who was noted for his effective spells against scorpion-bite. The latter then began his incantations, keeping time, all the while, with a bunch of margosa twigs, which he brandished, time and again, over the affected spot. After an interval, he questioned the sufferer, as is usual in such cases, if the pain had been allayed, to which the house-owner replied

that the scorpion's venom, which had shot up his arm, had indeed come down, "but not so," added he, "the worthy stranger who is perched uncomfortably high up in the rafters. He has not yet chosen to come down." The neighbour looked up, discovered the thief, and helped to have him secured.

18. *A SUDDEN OUTBURST OF FRIENDSHIP.*

ONE evening, as a petty shopkeeper, about to lock up, was engaged in counting a pile of coppers he had taken during the day; a friend dropped in for a chat. While the tale of the coins was in progress, a sharp gust of wind blew out the light, when the bazaarman, who was nothing if not extremely suspicious, and feared that his friend might annex a handful of the money, under cover of the dark, at once grasped his friend by both his arms, and enlarging on the intimate friendship that had subsisted between the two, ever since their childhood, begged his friend to take an oath that this intimacy should last unbroken to the last moment of their lives. "A light would soon be forthcoming" said he, as he shouted out to his wife to fetch one, and

tightened his grip over his friend's arms at the same time, " and I want you to swear in its sacred presence." So saying, he held his friend's hands fast, and did not relax his hold until the light arrived, and the friend took the oath required, by raising and bringing down his own right hand on the right palm of his friend.

19. "UNDoubtedly."

A Certain Bairagi owned a pet parrot whom he had taught to repeat the word "undoubtedly" in answer to anything said within its hearing. By way of obtaining for his pet bird credit for a marvellous power of divination, he used to carry the bird on his arm to some selected spot where he had previously taken care to bury some money in secret, and there amidst a crowd of spectators put it the question, "Shall I find money here?" The parrot would, of course, squeak out "undoubtedly"—the sole word he had been taught and the wily Bairagi would then delve for the buried money, and exhibit it, with an air of triumph, to the spectators standing open-mouthed with astonishment. This made many of them green with envy, at the thought of

the untold millions within reach of its owner.

One of these, whose verdancy made him an easy dupe to this transparent dodge, began to cast longing eyes on the bird, and thinking to enrich himself by the acquisition of this veritable treasure of a parrot, he became its proud possessor at a price that woud have paid a king's ransom. No sooner did the fool arrive home with the fruit of his folly, than he at once put its powers to the test, and began to ply the bird with questions as he had seen its former owner do. The usual answer being returned, he dug up each spot in succession, but invariably drew a blank. It was, at last, borne in upon his mind that he had been made a dupe of by the Bairagi, and he cried out in the bitterness of his disappointment, and at the utter collapse of all his castles in Spain, "What a born idiot I have been to be gulled by

such a transparent trick?" "Undoubtedly" came the parrot's apt. reply, 'the sole instance in which its words proved true; and the purchaser, it is superfluous to say, though a sadder, was thereafter, a wiser man.

20. *PAYING A FRIEND IN HIS OWN COIN.*

A BAZAAR man of slender means who did a thriving petty trade, and was desirous of adding to his exiguous capital, obtained a loan of 1,000 pagodas from each of ten sowcars, and after trading with the borrowed capital for some time, it occurred to him that it would prove a shorter road to riches if he could hoodwink his creditors.

He accordingly secreted all his property, and started a rumour that he had been robbed of his all at a dacoity in his house, and had been reduced to absolute penury.

One of his creditors, the hardest, sharpest, and most unscrupulous of the lot, and who did not fully believe the story of a dacoity and consequent destitution, but suspected that there were still some

few pickings to be got off the tradesman's bones, called on him in a friendly way, "and offered to put him up to a dodge, by following which he could effectually get 'rid' of all his creditors, provided he himself was paid his dues. The debtor eagerly closed with this offer, upon which the creditor instructed him to laugh a maniacal laugh, and cry out "Bay ! Bay !" to all his other creditors, by way of reply to anything they might ask.

This advice to act Hamlet was not only implicitly followed, but the debtor even went "one better," by treating the adviser himself (when he came to claim the reward of his services) in the same manner; for he greeted him with an idiotic stare and a burst of frenzied laughter, followed by the unintelligible cry of "Bay ! Bay !" The friend contained his patience, as best as he could, for a few

minutes, and then, pulling a long face, began, " Bay-Bay, may be, has done well in the case of the others ; but it was I that tipped you the hint ! " " Hint or no hint," stammered out the pretended lunatic, " it is Bay-Bay all round. Bay-Bay to you, and Bay-Bay even to your grandsire ! "

21. TIDINGS OF THE BATTLE.

IT being reported to a certain King, that his enemy's army was marching on his capital, he sent his own Commander-in-Chief to meet and dispefse the foe ere they approached the precincts of the city.

An itinerant vendor of sundry stores followed the King's troops with his moveable shop, thinking to make a considerable profit by vending provisions to the King's soldiers, but finding that the latter had been disastrously routed by the enemy, and that the remnant of the King's army had turned tail and was flying back in confusion, he began to retrace his steps citywards, as fast as his legs could carry him. The King, who was watching from the balcony of his palace, to see if any one arrived from the scene of the battle that could give him

the news of the result of the encounter, espied the itinerant vendor running home in hot haste. He accordingly summoned and asked him how the battle went. "Ours Sire! is the victory" said the grocer, whose native wit induced him to disguise the unwelcome tidings of the defeat in the garb of pleasantness. Pressed to state the grounds of his information, his reply was eminently characteristic, for his cunning answer was "though the enemy is putting forth every effort to overtake our soldiers, the latter are outrunning and distancing them. The race, therefore, is ours for certain." The King could scarcely help laughing, loud and long, at the merchant's ready wit, deeply vexed though he was at the evident defeat of his troops.

22. *WINKING FOR DEAR LIFE.*

ONE afternoon, an idle youth of the money-lending fraternity, who was rather vain of his personal accomplishments, and greatly fancied himself where the fair sex was in question, was sauntering along the street which fronted the Royal Palace, when he espied the Queen, gazing steadily through a window which commanded the thoroughfare. The idle youth who, as already observed, was a vain fellow, imagined that the Queen was looking at him, and ventured to give her a wink in acknowledgment of, what he fondly fancied was, an amorous glance directed at him.

The Queen remarking this, felt indignant at the insult, and apprised the Sovereign of it during the night, adding that she could single out the fellow who

had insulted her, if all the money-lenders of the city were summoned to appear at the palace on the morrow. Accordingly the King caused proclamation to be made by beat of tom-tom, throughout the capital, and summoned all adult male members of this profession, to muster at the palace gates by 3 P.M. on pain of severe penalties. Upon hearing this, the fraternity concerned held a secret conclave, and enquired if any member of their profession had contrived to give offence to Royalty, when it leaked out, to their surprise and consternation, that the vain youth had winked at the Queen on the previous evening. The assembly then pondered deeply over the matter, and came to the conclusion that his only safety lay in winking, vigorously and incessantly, with both eyes, until they had shewn themselves to the King, and returned home in safety.

Thus prepared, they obeyed the royal mandate, when the Queen instantly spotted out and indicated the culprit. The King sent for and questioned him sternly, upon his rude behaviour of the previous evening, but all the reply he got was a series of interminable winks, accompanied by a most guileless look. The King then turned to the assembled crowd for an explanation of this strange phenomenon, and was respectfully informed that the lad was liable to occasional fits of winking, and that when once the fit came on, it lasted for three days at least. This figment sufficed to hoodwink the King, and thus did the timorous youth escape from imminent peril of his life.

23. A WITNESS FOR BOTH SIDES.



THE headman of a village owned a pony, which was stolen from his possession by a Palayakaran, or Bandit, who had its tail clipped, in order to effect a change in its appearance. The owner, however, succeeded in tracing out the animal, and lodged a complaint before the King. Asked if he had any witness to prove his ownership of the pony, the Munsif named the village bazaarman. The Palayakaran was then summoned and questioned, and he replied, with unblushing mendacity, that the pony in question was his own, and he also named the same witness as the complainant.

The King then had the pony sent for, and pointing it out to the witness, bade him look well at it and say whose animal it was. The shopkeeper found himself between the horns of a dilemma. If he

spoke the truth and declared in favour of the Munsif, it would be to court destruction at the hands of the Palayakaran who, being a thorough-paced ruffian and the greatest dare-devil of a robber and assassin alive, was certain to loot his house and murder him; while, on the other hand, if he gave false evidence in favour of the latter, and against the headman, he would have to quit the village, for the Munsif would soon make the place too hot to hold him, not to mention the risk of his falsehood being otherwise found out, and himself punished for perjury. He, therefore, turned the matter carefully over in his mind, and resolved to shape his evidence into such a form that, while seeming to favour both sides, it conveyed a sufficient hint of the truth to the King. * "This pony, Sire," began the witness, fencing his answer with well-balanced words, "has a duplex appear-

ance. Looked at *before* (i.e., in front) it resembles the Munsif's animal, but seen in the *after-part* (i.e., in the rear) "it is like the Palayakaran's property."

The King, who was a shrewd person, rightly read a *double entendre* in this reply which conveyed also the sense that "before" the theft, the Munsif had the pony, while *after* it was stolen, it passed into the Palayakaran's keeping and had suffered a change in its dorsal appendage.

He, therefore, complimented the witness upon his sagacious and truthful answer, restored the pony to his owner, and gave the Palayakaran his deserts.

24. DEFRAUDING THE PUROHIT.

A N idle Pandaram shied a stone at an intrusive and troublesome cat, and thus chanced to kill it on the spot. As it is reckoned a bad type of sin to kill a cat, he sent for the Purohit Brahmin and asked him to say what the Shastras prescribed by way of atonement for so heinous a sin.

The Purohit answered that a likeness of the cat should be cast in gold, and presented to a Brahmin, in order to wipe out the sin ; upon which the Pandaram enquired, what one was to do who could not afford so costly a peace-offering. The reply was that in that case, a silver cat would suffice. From silver, he descended to copper ; and from copper to a lump of jaggery, as the Pandaram went on lowering the scale of the sinner's means. Seeing that the offering could not

well be cheaper than a piece of sugar, the culprit immediately ran into the house and fetched a lump about the size of a marble, and fashioning it into as near a likeness of the cat as he could, offered it, with betel and nut, to the Purohit himself, and bade him pronounce absolution three times. Having thus gained his object, the Pandaram quietly watched for a moment when the Brahmin loosened his hold of the gift, when he snatched the sugar from his hand and, putting it into his own mouth, bolted at once. The Brahmin remonstrating, he was quietly told that the Pandaram was content to take upon himself the lighter backsliding of having eaten the sugar, as the Brahmin had taken off his shoulders and relieved him of the weightier sin of killing a cat.

25. OUTWITTING A DEITY.

A BEGGAR, who was born blind, led a single life, and lived upon the charity of his neighbours, was long and incessantly assailing a particular deity with his prayers. The latter was at last moved by this continuous devotion, but fearing that his votary might not be easily satisfied, took care to bind him by an oath to ask for no more than a single blessing. At this strange condition, the thermometer of the beggar's hopes dropped down to zero. It puzzled him, for a long while, how to get even with the deity, but his professional ingenuity at last came to his aid, and after turning the matter carefully over in his mind, he hit upon a masterstroke of diplomacy. Epitomizing all his heart's desires into a single wish, "I hasten to obey thy behest, generous Lord!" quoth he, "and this

solitary boon is all I ask at thy hands, namely, that I should live to see the grand-child of my grand-child playing in a seven-storied palace and helped by a train of attendants to his meal of milk and rice, out of a golden cup," and he concluded by expressing his hope that he had not exceeded the limit of a single wish vouchsafed to him. The deity saw that he had been fairly done, for though single in form, the boon asked for comprised the manifold blessings of health, wealth, long life, restoration of sight, marriage and progeny, and thus constituted the very pinnacle of earthly happiness. For very admiration of his devotee's astuteness and consummate tact, if not in fulfilment of his plighted word, the deity felt bound to grant him all he asked for.

26. *DISAPPOINTING THE ROBBERS.*

ONE evening, a Brahmin went to answer the calls of nature, behind a tree, at the outskirts of the village, after having first deposited his "chombu" (a metal water pot) at a short distance. A number of robbers, who lay in wait for booty of this kind, having espied the vessel, were about to make away with it, when the Brahmin perceiving them, and scenting their design, resolved to baulk them of their prize, and thus soliloquised with himself. "Strange, that my bowels should prove so obstinate this evening! Ah! I have it! It is because I have left my pearl necklace at home. I'll even go home and fetch it at once." As he said this loud enough to be heard by the robbers, the latter fondly hoped to make a better thing of it, by playing a waiting game, and so let the wily Brah-

min slide home, fully expecting him to return immediately with the pearl necklace he had spoken of. The Brahmin was off like a shot, and lost no time in raising an alarm in the village, when the robbers were outnumbered, captured and clapped in the chavadi (Village Police Station).

27. GODS AND GODLINGS.

TWO country bumpkins went into a temple, to the younger of whom it was his first introduction into a place of worship. He remarked, after seeing the Abhishekam ceremony when the idol was bathed, " Is this what they call a Swami (God) ! Why, it is nothing more than a stone ! " One of the temple authorities happening to hear this blasphemy, administered a severe thrashing to the rustic youth, until he repented him of his folly, and promised never again to offend by uttering such profanity.

The yokels then proceeded to an eating house for their meals, which being none of the best, contained many particles of stone and sand. The elder having called the hotel-keeper's attention to the fact, the younger, who still retained a tingling recollection of his severe chastisement of

the morning at the temple, at once hit the former a couple of smart blows, and exclaimed, in a voice which rang with indignation, "Have you so soon forgotten what befel me at the temple this morning? How dare you call these *stones*! Correct yourself, if you would escape with a whole skin, and call these by their true name of Godlings (Chinna Swami). If the big one at the temple is a Swami, these little ones in the rice are, of course, own brothers to him. There is not the shadow of a reason for making flesh of one and fish of the rest."

28. *A NEW WAY OF MEETING AN
OLD DEBT.*

A HUSBANDMAN had borrowed a thousand Pagodas of a Chetti. The latter claiming repayment when the debt fell due, was for some years put off by the twelve month; then by the month, for a little longer; next by the week, and lastly by the day. On the last day appointed, the creditor again called, and in high hopes of repayment, for there were no more divisions of time left to admit of further postponement. No sooner did the debtor espy the Chetti at the top of the street, than he hastily retired to his garden, and began planting tamarind seeds along the fence. When the Chetti found him out, and taxed him with forgetfulness of his obligation, the husbandman turned round and answered that, so far

from forgetting the debt, he was at that very moment occupied, as might be seen, in devising the ways and means, for he meant to make no further delay but to pay up out of the first 'produce,' as soon as the seeds then being sown should grow up into trees and bear fruit. At this, the creditor could scarcely suppress a bitter laugh of disappointment, upon which the husbandman exclaimed " Well may you laugh now, inasmuch as a sure way of discharging your debt has, at last, been hit upon."

29. *AN HONEST THIEF AND A LYING COURTIER.*

A HARDEDNED thief, who was addicted to every conceivable vice, sought absolution from his priest. The latter asked him to give up his bad ways, but the thief would not. The former there-upon proposed to the thief that he should at least give up the sin of lying, to which the disciple agreed.

That very night, the latter set out on an errand to steal into the Royal palace and annex whatever he could lay hands on in the shape of valuables. The King, who was prowling about the premises in disguise, encountered the thief, and questioned him whither he was bound and why, to which the thief, having vowed to speak the truth, replied that he proposed to rob the King that night. The

King asked if he also might accompany and help, and the thief agreed. Arrived at the palace, the thief posted the King outside as a sentinel to watch and give the alarm, while he went in. He found three valuable rubies lying loose on the King's table, but as there was an odd number to divide among two, he left one alone and brought away two, of which he offered the King one, and explaining matters, took the other for his share. The King doubted the thief's word and examined his table after he entered the palace, but found that the thief had spoken the truth, and left one of the rubies on the table. Next morning, the King summoned his Minister and telling him that thieves appeared to have entered the palace overnight, asked him to see what was missing. The Minister, who found the single ruby, pocketed it and reported that the rubies left on the Royal table had all been made away with

hy the thieves. The King concluded, at once, that the thief was an honest man than his own paid courtier, and dismissing the latter, rewarded the thief for his truthfulness.

30. A SINGLE DROP OF HONEY AND
WHAT CAME OF IT.

A MUSSALMAN went to the bazaar street, and purchased some honey. A drop of it fell down, and a fly settled on it. The fly was at once pounced upon by a lizard, and the bazaarman's cat went for the lizard. The cat, in his turn, was attacked by the Mussalman's dog, which latter the bazaarman soon despatched. Bad as all this was, there was worse to come ; for, the bazaarman was then set upon by the Mussalman, who gave him but short shrift, while all the rest of the shopkeepers took up the cause of their *confrere*, and fell upon the Mussalman. All the Mussalman residents of the place then rose *en masse* against the bazaarmen, who were not without active sympathizers. The whole town

was thus divided into two factions which were soon up in arms—and a serious riot culminating in much loss of life occurred. When, at last, quiet was restored people, in their sober moments, began to ask themselves, the cause of so serious a disturbance, when it transpired that it all arose out of a single drop of honey. Such are trivial causes that lead to gigantic results.

31. THE BRAHMACHARIN THAT UPSET A BOAT.

A DEEP river, which ran across a public highway, used to be crossed by a ferryboat. When this boat was quite full, on one of its trips, and was about to start for the opposite bank, it was boarded by a woman with a bundle of brooms, for sale—a snake charmer with a snake in a box, and a monkey dancer with a monkey. They were admitted, and were soon followed by a Brahmacharin who begged hard to be taken in. He, also, was admitted by the greedy ferryman, in spite of the unanimous protests of the other passengers, who knew that the boat was overfull, and that a Brahmacharin had decided leanings towards mischief, and, therefore, preferred his room to his company. To prevent his playing any pranks, the boatman had secured the Brahmin

youth by tying up his hands and feet, but as the boat reached mid stream, the Brahmacharin could no longer contain his patience, but pulling a few sticks out of the broom-bundle by his teeth, prodded the monkey therewith, in the tenderest part of his body. The monkey jumped up at this, and alighted, plump on the snake-box, the lid of which flew open. Thereupon, the sleeping snake was aroused, and raised his hood in a threatening manner. The passengers nearest the reptile got alarmed, and in order to give it a wide berth, they leant, in a body, towards the opposite side of the boat. Its equilibrium thus disturbed, the latter at once capsized, and the passengers were, one and all, drowned. Herein was verified the saying that, for pure mischief, a single Brahmacharin was equal to a century of monkeys rolled into one.

A VILLAGE washerman owned a donkey and a watch dog. One night a number of thieves entered the house, but the dog, whose duty and wont it was to bark and to awaken his master remained silent. The donkey remonstrated with the dog upon the omission, but was told by the dog in reply, that though he had, again and again, saved his master's property by barking in time, the former had never shown his appreciation of the invaluable services rendered by him, which he had taken as a matter of course. "Let the thieves have their innings of our ungrateful master this time" quoth the dog "for I shall not raise my voice again to warn him." The donkey, who was less hard of heart, decided, thereupon, to supply the dog's place, and began to bray, upon which

the washerman was aroused, and the thieves hid themselves. ' The former finding nothing the matter, went up to the donkey, and gave him a good beating for having unnecessarily disturbed his rest, to which he again retired. Finding the coast now clear for them, the thieves returned and robbed the washerman of all there was in the house. ' The dog who had remained a silent spectator of all this then turned to the donkey and exclaimed " See how our master rewards fidelity to his interests, and also the mischief of people meddling in business which concerneth them not. Had you minded your own affairs, you had escaped a sore skin to-night ! "

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PREFACE.

THE recent appearance of an English version of the well-known Tales of Tennali Rama,* and the fact that that work has already reached a second edition, has induced the translator to make an attempt at preserving and presenting to the foreign reader this interesting batch of equally popular tales. Whether such a prodigy of judicial and detective acumen, as Mariada Raman is depicted, really existed or whether the character is only the creation of a luxuriant brain, like Sir Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes, "deponent sayeth not," but the tales will be found to display on the part of the hero, illimitable resource in the art of detection, a profound insight into human

* Tales of Tennali Rama by Pandit S. M. Natesa Sastri, B.A., M.F.L.S. (G. A. Natesan & Co., Madras. Price As. 4.)

nature, and a remarkable perspicacity in the unraveling of truth. They are also not devoid of interest as affording the foreign reader a peep into the inner life and customs of the Hindus in Southern India. Some of these tales at all events, may help to provoke a hearty laugh, and to laugh now and then, we are somewhere told, is good and wholesome for us all.

P. R.

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We do not think we are guilty of any exaggeration when we say that there is no Indian firm of publishers which can surpass Messrs. G. A. Natesan and Co., of Madras, in point of utilitarian enterprise of a most patriotic character. The firm's great aim is how best and most expeditiously to serve the public. Is a Congress held? Why, immediately within two weeks we are greeted with a handsome portable volume of the proceedings, neatly printed, at the most moderate price, such as to be within the reach of the poorest reader. Similarly with the proceedings of all other Conferences and Leagues. But what is more praiseworthy is the desire to acquaint the rising generation of youth with the utterances of our leading public men who have already borne the brunt and heat of the day. For instance, it is a fact that the annual reports of our Indian National Congress, specially the Presidential Addresses, are out of print. Many inquiries are made with the Joint Secretaries for these but they have regrettably to disappoint them. To meet such a growing demand, Messrs. Natesan and Co. have just issued an excellently got-up volume of 1,100 pages containing the origin and growth of our great National Political Institution, full text of all the Presidential Addresses *up-to-date*, reprint of all the Congress Resolutions, extracts from the Addresses of Welcome by Chairmen of Reception Committees and notable utterances besides the portraits of all Congress Presidents. This, indeed, is a distinct patriotic service which we dare say every true son of India will greatly appreciate. It is a capital handbook of the Congress—a veritable *vade mecum* and ought to find an extensive sale at only 3 Rupees a copy which is cheap enough in all conscience. * * * We repeat, all Indians should feel exceedingly grateful for all these valuable publications at cheap prices to Messrs. Natesan & Co. But we know how ardent, modest, and sober a patriot is the head of this most enterprising Indian firm. Mr. G. A. Natesan, who is an University graduate, is indeed a jewel in Madras and elsewhere in the publication of cheap, useful, and handy Indian literature. We wish him and his firm every prosperity.—*The Kaiser-i-hind, Bombay.*

NATESAN'S PUBLICATIONS.

To the head of the enterprising firm of G. A. Natesan and Co., Madras, all those who take any interest at all in contemporary events in India which will in the future form its history are thankful for their publications. Not content with the editing and publishing of a first class monthly like the *Indian Review*, he has written, edited and published a number of books and pamphlets which do credit not only to his scholarship, but also to his business capacity. He has published short biographical sketches of many eminent Indians, e. g., Sir Pherozeshah Mehta, Lala Lajpat Rai, Mr. Surendranath Banerji, Mr. Dinsha Edulji Wacha, the late Mahadev Govind Ranade, Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, Swami Vivekananda, Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji, the Honorable Mr. Gopal Krishna Gokhale, Dr. Rash Behari Ghose, and Mrs. Annie Besant. They are a series of uniform booklets, each with a frontispiece and any one of which can be bought for the modest sum of two annas or four annas. He has published collections of the presidential and inaugural addresses that have been delivered at the different Congresses and Conferences that have been held within the last four years at Surat, Calcutta and Benares. * * * * He has published symposiums of views of officials and non-officials, Indians and Europeans on such subjects as Sedition, the Swadeshi Movement, and the National Congress. By collecting the speeches and writings of Dr. Rash Behari Ghose, Swami Vivekananda, the Honorable Mr. Gopal Krishna Gokhale, Lord Morley, he has done a distinct service to both the younger and elder generations, of Indians; for, these are books which the younger people like to have constantly by their side to study and the elders to refer to occasionally. It is very seldom indeed that we see business capacity in a literary man, but Mr. Natesan seems to be one of those very few men who combine in themselves both of those capacities.—*The Indian People, Allahabad.*

TALES OF MARIADA RAMAN.

I.

THE THIEVES OUTWITTED.

A GANG. of four thieves in the Chola country, boarding for the time at an old woman's house, one day, entrusted her with the safe custody of a sealed brass pot containing their plunder, with strict injunctions that it was only to be returned on the joint demand of all four of them. One morning, as the thieves were seated on the pial in front of the house, a butter-milk seller passed along the street and, wishing to have a drink, they sent the youngest of them to fetch a vessel from the boarding-house woman. The young thief saw his opportunity in this and, entering the house, informed the old lady that his companions had sent

him to fetch the brass pot left with her. She, however, demurred to this and referred to the original understanding, upon which the arch rogue referred her to his friends seated outside. She shouted out to them asking if she might deliver *the* pot to their messenger and they, thinking only of *a* pot they wanted for buying butter-milk, shouted back a reply in the affirmative. The safe deposit was accordingly returned, and the messenger disappeared with it through the backdoor of the house. The remaining three, after waiting in vain for the return of their companion with the required vessel, entered the house and were thunderstruck on learning what had actually happened. Resolved, however, to make the old lady pay for their own folly, they dragged her before the City Judge. The latter, after due enquiry, pronounced judgment in favour of the thieves. As the unfortu-

nate woman was returning home, loudly bewailing her misfortune and the injustice of the Judge's verdict, a bright and precociously wise-looking youth, named Raman, who was engaged in a game of marbles with his playmates, questioned the woman and learnt the cause of her grief. He, too, appeared moved by the woman's tale of injustice, and cried out, as his marble dropped into its appropriate hole, "May Heaven's thunderbolt strike the unjust Judge who decided against the widow, as certainly as my marble has found its goal." The Royal Harkaras, who happened to hear this as they passed by, took the youngster up to the King and reported his words. The King was amused, and thus addressed Raman: "Well, young Sir ! consider yourself the Judge in this case, and deal even-handed justice, if you can do it better." Raman, nothing daunted by the royal mandate, cheerfully

took a seat then and these, summoned the parties and recorded their statements and his judgment, delivered without a moment's doubt or hesitation, was that inasmuch as the original compact was that the safe-deposit was not to be returned unless and until the whole quartette of thieves jointly demanded it, the present Plaintiffs should be non-suited. The King was so charmed at this remarkable display of wisdom and shrewdness on the part of Raman, that he literally loaded him with honors and presents, in consequence of which he was ever after known as Mariada Raman, or the Honored Raman, and he also conferred on him the office of a Judge in his realm. Many were the difficult cases of hard swearing in which Mariada Raman proved by his shrewdness, his peculiar fitness for the discovery of truth and for dealing even-handed justice. "

II.

THE CHILD MURDERESS DETECTED.

MARIADA Raman's father, when he heard of his son's honors and appointment at Court, was in no wise pleased at his good fortune. To him it seemed that the office of a Judge was no empty honor, involving, as it did, the sifting of truth from a mass of falsehood, and such at times was the difficulty that even the Devas found it impossible to discover on which side truth and justice lay. He, therefore, did his best to persuade his son to relinquish the office as, in his opinion, the Judge who gave an erroneous or unjust verdict was guilty of heinous sin. Mariada Raman, however, did not agree to this, and declared that God had endowed him

with a keenness of perception and wisdom sufficient to detect the hardest case, and that, acting to the best of his talents and placing his trust in Heavenly guidance, he feared not going wrong or incurring sin. Seeing that his son was firm in his resolve, the father resigned him to his fate and decided to betake himself to the life of a wanderer, so that he might not be on the spot to hear the cries of the litigants who might unjustly lose their causes by the mistakes of his son, and that he might not be a participator of his sin by associating with him.

He, accordingly, left the house, one day, without acquainting his son, and arrived, towards nightfall, at a neighbouring village, where he laid himself down to rest on the outer pial of a house from which the master was absent. Now, it so happened that the owner of the house had two wives and a child by the younger

of them, and that the latter was not very faithful to her spouse. She awoke at about midnight, when her infant and her co-wife were both fast asleep, and opening the door, admitted her paramour, and was enjoying his company. Suddenly she heard her baby set up a cry, and for fear that the household might be awakened and her guilt discovered, the wretched mother made no scruple to silence its cries by squeezing its neck. Having let her midnight visitor depart, she immediately began a most piercing lamentation for the death of her child, which she attributed to the first wife.

The officers of the law, accordingly took up the parties to Mariada Raman, for justice, and, thither also, his father followed them in disguise. He had been awake all night, and had seen what had happened. He, therefore, said to himself "I shall see how my son acquits himself

in this case, for if he succeeds in discovering the truth of this affair, he may well be trusted to elucidate the most intricate mystery."

On hearing the parties, Mariada Raman was unable to make up his mind as to the real author of this child-murder. The second wife persisted in charging the elder wife, while the latter protested her innocence with equal vehemence. The former declared that she herself had seen the crime perpetrated but had no witness, and the latter had nobody to vouch for her innocence but her own vehement protestation.

Mariada Raman inwardly prayed to God for guidance in the matter, and after a short deliberation, directed the two women, accuser, and accused, to swear to the truth of their respective assertions, unsupported as they were by other evidence, by going round the assembly

three times, quite naked, and repeating their stories. The junior wife, the real culprit, no sooner did she hear the works than she made ready to strip, but the elder, resolved rather to lay down her life than thus expose herself to shame, declared that she was ready to admit that she had committed the crime. Mariada Raman was satisfied, from their respective behaviours, that the second wife was the real murderer of her child, and began to interrogate her, with such success that he forced her to confess her guilt and falsehood, and she was accordingly sentenced to be hanged.

Mariada Raman's father was so delighted at his son's sharpness, that he threw off his disguise, went up to him and declared that he was overjoyed to find how well he deserved the honor and position conferred on him by the King, and that, henceforth, he had no doubt of

his acquitting himself thoroughly well in his office. He assured him also that he had been an eyewitness of the occurrences of the previous night, and that the real culprit was the unchaste wife, as Mariada Raman had so cleverly found out.

III.

THE COTTON MERCHANTS AND THEIR PET CAT..



OUR partners who dealt in cotton bales, brought up a cat which served to keep rats off their goods. They treated their pet kitten with so much fondness, that having apportioned its four legs among themselves, each loaded his own leg of the cat with costly golden anklets and other valuable jewels. One day, the cat happened to hurt one of its legs, and its owner accordingly bandaged the wounded limb with a rag soaked in oil. The cat happening to approach the hearth, its bandage caught fire, and as it limped and jumped about hither and thither, owing to great pain, the whole stock of cotton bales in the joint godown caught fire and was completely destroyed. The owner of the

wounded leg was thereupon sued by the other three partners for damages, on the ground that it was the wounded leg that had caused the conflagration of their whole stock-in-trade. Mariada Raman, before whom the cause came up, knew that the unfortunate Defendant was not really to blame as he had intended nothing evil, and that the Plaintiffs were preferring a frivolous claim against him. He, therefore, gave a decree whereby he directed that the three partners who owned the sound legs, *i. e.*, the Plaintiffs, in fact, should make good to the owner of the wounded leg, the Defendant, one quarter of the value of the cotton bales destroyed, on the ground that it was the sound legs which had helped the cat to jump about and set fire to the cotton bales.

IV.

THE PEARLS RECOVERED.

 CERTAIN merchant who had two costly pearls worth a thousand rupees each, having occasion to proceed on a journey, entrusted the pearls to his neighbour to be returned to him when he came back. On his return, he claimed the return of his deposit, but his neighbour, taking advantage of there being no witnesses to the transaction, gave him a point-blank denial of having ever been entrusted with any pearls. The owner, therefore, had recourse to Mariada Raman in his difficulty. Raman, on examining both the parties, and keenly observing their demeanour, came to the conclusion that the case was true as represented by the Plaintiff, but to make assurance doubly sure, he deferred

judgment for a few days. Meanwhile, having acquainted himself from the Plaintiff's deposition with the exact size and appearance of his pearls, he obtained ninety-eight pearls, of the same quality, size and appearance, which he passed through an old worn-out string, and sending for the Defendant, handed them to him with a request to have them restrung on a new silken cord saying, as he did so, that he had every confidence in the Defendant's integrity and that he trusted he would return the entire 100 intact. The Defendant, who felt honored by this mark of confidence, cheerfully undertook to do so, but on coming home and counting the pearls, he found only 98. Imagining that the missing ones must have been lost on the way, and fearing an unfavourable verdict in the merchant's suit if he reported the deficiency, he quietly substituted the pearls he had

robbed the merchant of and returned a string of 100 pearls to Mariada Raman. The latter, finding his suspicions confirmed, passed suitable sentence on the Defendant, and restored his pearls to the Plaintiff.

*IRON-EATING RATS versus
MAN-EATING KITES.*

HARDWARE merchant, who had occasion to go abroad, left his stock-in-trade in charge of a friend, but on claiming it on his return, was met with the reply that a colony of rats had invaded the store, and eaten up all the iron. He accordingly complained to Mariada Raman, who put him up to a trick of the same kind as his acquaintance had played upon him. The result was that the merchant, apparently, resumed friendly relations with his opponent, and, one festival day, invited his opponent's son home to participate in the merry-making. He, however, failed to return the boy as promised, and concealed him somewhere, and, on being questioned by his opponent, replied that as he was bringing the lad home, a

kite had pounced upon him and carried him off. The father having, in his turn, invoked the aid of Mariada Ramam, the latter heard both parties, and after severely admonishing them for the patent falsehood of their amazing assertions, which seemed like an attempt to cover a whole pumpkin with a handful of rice, directed that each of them should forthwith return the other's property on pain of being incarcerated for perjury.

VI.

THRIFTY versus THRIFTLESS.

WO dairy women lived in opposite houses, one of whom owned only two cows, while the other was mistress of ten times that number. The latter, who was wanting in thrift, borrowed a couple of viss of ghee from the former with a promise to return it within a specified time, but when the day arrived and she was pressed to return the loan, she wickedly repudiated the transaction altogether.

Mariada Raman was appealed to, and, as usual, the plaintiff had no witnesses, while the Defendant supported her plea by the fact that she was far richer than the Plaintiff, and that the alleged loan was ridiculous on the face of it.

Mariada Raman, who had his own doubts, bade the parties attend on the following day, and, in the meantime, caused a miry puddle to be made right across the way to the Court-House, so that any one arriving there must needs wade through it.

On the parties appearing before him, next day, with their legs besmeared knee-deep with mud, Mariada Raman caused the women to be supplied with two vessels full of water, and of exactly equal capacity, and ordered them to wash their legs before entering the Court. The Plaintiff after removing all vestige of mud from her legs had still half a pot of water left while the Defendant, had used up all her water, and had one leg still miry. Mariada Raman rightly concluded from this, that the Defendant was a thriftless woman, and that her plea of wealth being

of no use, she had doubtless borrowed the ghee as alleged by the Plaintiff, and he decreed its immediate restoration.



VII.

A MODERN SHYLOCK AND HOW HE WAS OUTWITTED.

 A RICH old merchant at the point of death, whose sole relative was a son who was still a child, entrusted his wealth, a sum of 10,000 Pagodas, to the care of a friend, with the request that he would kindly take care of it until his son should come of age, and then make over to him *such portion of the money as he liked*. The old man's object was that the trustee should pay himself a reasonable remuneration for his trouble, and that the remainder, that is, the bulk of the property should go to his son. Through a feeling of delicacy, however, he did not specify the amount of remuneration, but left it to his friend's sense of justice, and

of the fitness of things. The latter, however, proved unworthy of the confidence reposed in him—for when the boy on coming of age, claimed his inheritance, he had the hardihood to offer him only 1,000 Pagodas or a tithe of the amount left with him, and he complacently explained that the compact with the deceased was that he should only give the boy “whatever he liked.”

Against this audacious piece of injustice, the boy appealed to Mariada Raman who, after hearing the Defendant saw what manner of man he had to deal with, turned the tables upon him and put matters right, by decreeing that he was to surrender to the boy the sum of Pagodas 9,000, being the amount “he liked,” and to keep for himself the balance of 1,000 Pagodas, which he did not like, and was ready to offer the boy. Based, as it was, upon the strict letter of the contract

relied upon by the Defendant himself, he was obliged quietly to submit to this judgment, though so little to his taste.



VIII.

THE THIEF BETRAYED BY HIS OWN CONDUCT.

 LEARNED man who had gone abroad in quest of wealth, and was returning home with all his earnings, was waylaid by a thief as he was nearing his village, and eased of his bundle. The aggrieved person complained to Mariada Raman who summoned the thief and questioned him, but the latter swore that he knew nothing. Suspecting that he had an arch-rogue to deal with, and determined to elicit the truth by a stratagem, Mariada Raman made believe to dismiss the case, and sent the parties to their respective homes ; but unknown to the thief, he sent a couple of spies, in disguise, to shadow him and report on

his conduct. No sooner did the thief return home, than his wife eagerly questioned him as to the issue of the affair in respect of which he had been summoned, when the thief replied that he had succeeded in getting off by swearing that he knew nothing of the matter. This colloquy being reported to Mariada Raman, he immediately sent for the thief, and besides making him disgorge his plunder, inflicted condign punishment upon him.

IX.

*THE FALSE WITNESSES EXPOSED BY
THEIR OWN CONDUCT.*



CERTAIN person about to start on a prolonged pilgrimage to Benares and other holy places, deposited with a merchant for safe custody, during his absence, a valuable ruby, which he did not care either to leave at home, or to carry on his person. On his return from pilgrimage, some four years later, he claimed his ruby back from the merchant, but the latter, wishing to appropriate the jewel to himself, replied that he had already returned the ruby in the presence of three witnesses ; and to support him in his falsehood, he hired his own washerman, barber, and potter, who were under obligations to him, and were

prepared to support him through thick and thin. Under these circumstances, the depositor complained to Mariada Raman, and explained to him how matters stood. The latter sent for the Defendant and his witnesses and, after recording their statements, caused them all to be placed apart at a considerable distance from one another, with directions to each of them to prepare a separate clay model showing the size and shape of the ruby referred to, and to submit the same for his inspection. The Plaintiff and Defendant had no difficulty in preparing correct models, but the false witnesses who had never seen the gem in question, had to draw entirely on their imagination, and each submitted a model of a different size and shape. That of the washerman was a striking likeness of the stone on which he habitually washed clothes, while the barber's was a replica of the

whetstone on which he ground his razor, and the potter produced a model which bore a salient resemblance to a brick. It was clear from this that none of the witnesses had ever set eyes on the ruby they swore to have seen returned. Mariada Raman, accordingly, decreed the return of the gem, and awarded suitable punishment to the merchant and his witnesses for their deliberate mendacity.

X.

THE BROKEN CROCKERY SET OFF AGAINST THE PROCESSIONAL ELEPHANT.

A GENTLEMAN who desired to conduct the wedding procession of his son with suitable splendour borrowed, from its Mussalman owner, an elephant to accompany the procession. During the progress of the procession, the elephant died all of a sudden, through some cause unknown. The borrower, at once, went and explained the matter to the owner and offered to make reasonable compensation. The latter would not listen to this, but insisting on his own animal being restored alive, laid his complaint before Mariada Raman. Seeing how matters stood, Mariada

Raman tried his best to induce the complainant to accept compensation, but to no purpose. He then postponed the case to the following day and dismissed the parties. Meanwhile, he sent for the Defendant privately, and advised him not to appear at Court next day, until the Plaintiff should come in person and call him. He also directed him to pile up all the old crockery he could collect in his house, behind his street door and to leave it ajar, so that when the Plaintiff came to call him, in a hurry, he might push the door open, and thus damage all the pots. As soon as this happened, the Defendant was to create as much din as possible so that all his neighbours might hear him, and he was then to charge the Plaintiff with having destroyed his family pots, which had descended from father to son for generations, and were, therefore, set store by. He was then to come to Mariada

Raman and make his counter complaint. Things happened that way and the Defendant was even more persistent and emphatic than Plaintiff, in his demand that the identical pots should be restored, safe and sound, and that no amount of money would compensate him for his loss. Mariada Raman accordingly decided both of these preposterous claims by a mutual set off, decreeing that the damaged pots wiped out the claim in respect of the dead elephant. Hence the well-known saying, ஆனக்கும் பானக்கும் சரியாமலிட்டது.



XI. *

THE LYING DEBTOR CONVICTED OUT OF HIS OWN MOUTH.

 HUSBANDMAN executed a bond and borrowed a hundred Pagodas of a Chetti. On the latter claiming repayment in due course, the debtor bade him call on the following day at his farm with the bond, when he would discharge the amount due, with interest. The creditor, suspecting no harm, did so accordingly, when the debtor receiving the bond from his hands, on pretence of looking at the date, tore it to tatters at once, and threw the bits into the fire. The creditor, thereupon, complained to Mariada Raman, who sent for the debtor and questioned him. The latter denied ever having borrowed money, executed

a bond, or torn it as alleged. Dismissing the parties for the day, Mariada Raman sent for the Chetti and, privately, asked him about the size of the bond alleged to have been destroyed. The latter, speaking the truth, said it was about a *span* long, upon which Mariada Raman advised him to say, when again questioned in the presence of the debtor on the following day, that it was a *cubit* in length. The following day, accordingly, in the presence of the Defendant, Mariada Raman, after cautioning the Plaintiff to speak the truth, asked him to specify the exact size of the bond. The Chetti having, as agreed upon, declared that it was a *cubit* in length, the debtor, in an unguarded moment, blurted out that it was an astounding lie, for, in fact, the bond was only a *span* in length, and added that a person who could swear such an audacious falsehood in a Court of

Justice, was not entitled to be heard. This was exactly what Mariada Raman wished to elicit, and being satisfied that the Defendant's denials were grossly untrue, he directed him to return the amount borrowed forthwith, with interest and also awarded him fitting punishment, for the mischief and perjury committed by him, with a view to escape his just obligation.

XII.

THE DISHONEST BROTHER EXPOSED BY HIS SYMPATHY WITH A THIEF.

A CERTAIN father of four sons died, leaving behind him a widow and these sons. He had entrusted to his wife the key of a box containing his valuables including four costly gems worth 4,000 Pagodas, with instructions to keep them in her possession so long as the brothers lived in amity with her, and to hand over to each, one of the gems, in case they should disagree and choose to live separately. While they were living together, they were allowed to open the box and take out any money required for expenses, and availing himself of one of these opportunities, the youngest brother abstracted one of the

gems, which was still joint property, and so committed theft. The loss being soon discovered, charges and recrimination ensued, and the brothers, tired of jangling and wrangling among themselves, finally sought the interference of Mariada Raman. The latter, desiring to gain an insight into their character and propensities, invited them to spend a few days with him, and one night, in the course of conversation, related to them the following tale :—

Once upon a time, a certain royal princess, on her education being completed, paid a visit to her preceptor, and asked him to say what present would be most acceptable to him, by way of *Guru Dakshina* or Preceptor's Honorarium. The preceptor, overcome by her rare beauty and yielding to a wicked impulse, begged her to give him a promise that she would grant whatever

he might ask for, and after receiving this assurance, he mentioned the desire of his heart. The princess, faithful to her plighted truth, promised to gratify his desires, when the time arrived for her to consummate her marriage with her husband. Shortly afterwards, this opportunity occurred, when she informed her husband how she had bound herself by a solemn promise to her preceptor, and the latter, respecting her truthfulness and honor, permitted her to go and fulfil her undertaking. On her way to her preceptor, she was waylaid by a thief, who insisted on easing her of all her ornaments. She begged him to desist a while and promised to meet him on her return from her teacher, when she would voluntarily surrender, all her jewels. The thief then let her proceed on her way, and arriving at her preceptor's, she declared her readiness to gratify him, and begged

to be released without loss of time. The preceptor was thoroughly overcome by the faithfulness of her conduct, and abandoning his evil designs, gave her his tutorial blessing and dismissed her home. On her return, she came to the spot where she had left the thief, and begged him to take her jewels. The thief, too, was over-awed by such an unique specimen of honorable conduct and giving up his evil intentions, loaded her with costly presents in lieu of robbing her, and most reverentially took leave of her. Arrived at home, she related to her husband all that had happened, and the latter, overjoyed at his wife's fidelity and truthfulness, honored her all the more.

After concluding this story, Mariada Raman, questioned each of the brothers as to his opinion of which of the several characters struck them as most worthy of

admiration. The eldest named the preceptor, the second the princess' husband, and the third the princess herself while the fourth and youngest gave his verdict in favour of the thief. No sooner had the brothers given their answers, than Mariada Rajan came to the conclusion that the youngest was the most likely person to have stolen the gem as evidenced by his sympathy with the thief, and soon elicited his confession by subjecting him to a strict and searching interrogation. He recovered and restored the gem to the three elder brothers, and saw that the youngest did not escape the just punishment of his crime.

XIII.

A WOULD-BE-WIFE-STEALER FOILED.

 HUSBAND and wife, travelling by themselves far from their country, were crossing a deep river; the husband leading the way and the wife following. Unknown to them, a third person also started to ford the river at the same point and just behind the pair. As the woman came to the deeper portions of the stream, she had to raise her garments to preserve them dry. On one of these occasions, the stranger espied a mole on her leg, and as soon as all the parties reached the opposite bank, he put forward an impudent claim, saying that the woman was his wife, and thus quarrelling with one another, the parties arrived before Mariada Raman. The latter called upon the rival claimants to adduce evidence to

support their claims, upon which the real husband confessed his inability to cite witnesses, as he was far away from his country. The false claimant, however, while admitting, likewise, his inability to adduce oral testimony, relied upon his knowledge of the mole on one of the woman's legs, a mark which only a husband, and no other person, could be acquainted with and he begged that the woman might be stripped, and examined by one of her own sex. This shameless and impudent suggestion caused great suspicion in Mariada Raman's mind. He accordingly sent for the public Executioner, and thus commanded him. " You know who the abandoned wretch is, that desires to outrage female chastity. Lead him away, and decapitate him forthwith." The stranger and false claimant literally felt his head wobble on his shoulders upon hearing this threat, which, with his

guilty conscience, he applied to himself. He fell prostrate before Mariada Raman, confessed the falsehood of his claim, and explained how he had been enabled, to support it. Mariada Raman was thus able to restore the wife to her legitimate husband, and to award substantial punishment to the pretender.

THE RIGHT DROMIO DISCOVERED BY ARTIFICE.

A HUSBANDMAN'S youthful wife, who belonged to another part of the country than where the husband dwelt, had been fetched home to her parents' house for a short stay. On her return being delayed, the husband went to her place, and asked her parents to send her along with him. They were quite willing, and accordingly consulted their *purohit* upon an auspicious day for the return journey. The latter declared that that being *Navami* or the 9th day of the fortnight, was an unlucky day, but that the next day would answer very well. The husband, was informed of this, but would not listen to advice, and saying how could the day of the

fortnight, or anything else stand in the way of one's taking one's own wife home, insisted on returning at once, and was most reluctantly allowed to do so, but his foolhardy conduct was fraught with serious consequences. On the way, having to answer the calls of nature, he left his wife under a tree, and went aside a short distance, when *Navami Purusha* (the deity who presides over the 9th day of the fortnight) appeared on the scene, exactly like the husband in form, stature and voice, and coming up to the wife he led her away, the latter fully believing that she was following her own husband. When the husband returned, he missed his wife under the tree, but looking up the road, found to his amazement and horror, that she was following an exact double of himself, at a short distance. He gave them chase, and overtook them soon after, and claimed

his wife whereat, his duplicate turned round upon him, and questioned his sanity, because, as he said, 'no one who had not absolutely taken leave of his senses, could mistake another's wife for his own. Quarrelling in this manner, they arrived before Mariada Raman, and made their respective representations. The latter referred to the woman for a solution of the difficulty, but she confessed her inability to decide the point, as the two persons were as like one another as a pair of twins, and added that she looked to the Judge to help her out of her own difficulty. Mariada Raman who felt confronted with a most difficult problem, and was at his wit's end how to proceed in the matter, sent the parties home for the day, and inwardly prayed to God for guidance, when a happy thought struck him. He caused an earthen jug of "khooja" to be prepared, with a

narrow neck not wide enough to admit one's thumb, and next day, he summoned the parties and declared that he would give his verdict in favour of the claimant who succeeded in effecting his ingress into the jug and issuing out of it again, with no damage to himself or to the vessel. This, a veritable passage of a camel through the eye of a needle, was more than human gymnastics could achieve, and the husband accordingly gave up his cause for lost. *Navami Purusha*, on the other hand, who was an immortal, and was able to perform miracles, succeeded in achieving this marvellous feat, and it became clear to Mariada Raman, that it was he that was falsely claiming the other's wife, as nothing short of supernatural ability could have helped to bring about a likeness so striking, salient, and wonderful between two persons. Mariada Raman

accordingly did due honor to *Navami Purushā*, who confessed that he had acted thus, by way of teaching the husbandman a better regard to orthodox customs, and the advice of elders. The wife was accordingly restored to her husband, and *Navami Purusha* complimented Mariada Raman on his remarkable sagacity in unraveling this mystery.

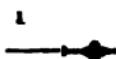
XV.

THE EXTORTIONATE INN-KEEPER, OR THE BITER BIT.

 FAMISHED traveller arrived at a *chuttram*, and tendered the Brahmin woman, who kept an eating house therein, four *fanams*, and declaring that he was dying of hunger, begged her to give him, at once, a mouthful of rice, "no bigger" said he, "than a lime" : (எலு மிச்சங்காயலவு சாதம்) meaning of course, that a little would appease his hunger. The woman, taking him at his word, placed on a leaf before him a small lump of boiled rice no bigger than a lime in size. The traveller demurred to this and urged that he was not to be taken *au pied de la lattre*, that he spoke of the size of a lime, only by way of euphemism, and that the quantity served up was ridiculously

inadequate to keep body and soul together. The woman, however, declined to give him any more food, and stoutly maintained that she had fulfilled her part of the contract. The traveller, accordingly, went up to Mariada Raman and sued for the recovery of his money. Mariada Raman sent for the woman, and asked her if it was true that she had agreed to give him (*ஏஷம்*) Boiled rice as big as a lime—and on her replying in the affirmative, he asked her if she had kept her word. In reply to this, she ran home, fetched the leaf containing the small lump of rice and exhibited it exultantly. Mariada Raman, however, proved “one too many” for her, and completely knocked the ground from under her feet, by decreeing that as there was not a single (*ஏஷம்*) in it, that was as big as a lime, the woman should either supply a single grain of rice as big as that fruit, or

refund the traveller his money. Hence the money went to its rightful owner, and the adage was verified that "under the tree will fall its own fruit."



XVI.

THE RING RESTORED.

CERTAIN person, proceeding to a wedding, borrowed a golden ring of a friend. The owner, finding the ring on the borrower's finger, a few days later, asked for its return, when the latter, who had not the faintest ghost of any such intention, repudiated the loan point-blank, and roundly denounced him as a liar. The owner, then, had recourse to Mariada Raman, who summoned and questioned the borrower; but the latter characterized it as a most shameless and impudent claim. There being no witnesses on either side, and wishing to ascertain the real truth of the matter, Mariada Raman sent for a third person to test and weigh the gold, saying, as he handed him the ring, that he would, under the circumstances, divide

the value of the ring equally between the rival claimants. He, however, first took care to convey a secret hint to the mediator to rub away as much gold as he could in the process of testing it on the touchstone, and to under-estimate both its quality and value, and he sent a peon along with the parties, to observe what occurred. As the mediator was rubbing away too much gold, the real owner kept protesting against this spoliation, and when he heard the quality and value under-estimated, he fairly broke down, and began to weep, while, the borrower remained mute, and quite unconcerned, all the while. Upon their respective demeanors being reported to Mariada Raman, he at once spotted the black sheep, and restored his ring to the complainant. Herein was verified the saying, that ill-gotten gold has neither quality nor value.

—(o)—

XVII.

THE FOWL THIEF BETRAYS HERSELF.

 WOMAN'S fowl was stolen by her neighbour, who caught it on its straying into her house, and immediately cooked and made a meal of it. The owner had seen the bird enter the house of her neighbour, and its non-return questioned her about it, but the culprit swore, by all the gods in the creation, that she had never set eyes on it. The owner, thereupon, complained to Mariada Raman, and the thief still persisting in her protestation of innocence, and there being no evidence, Mariada Raman dismissed the parties home. He was, however, determined upon getting at the root of the matter, and hit upon a piece of acting which would throw the thief off her guard,

if thief she was, as he more than half suspected. Just as the two women were leaving the Court, and in a voice loud enough to be heard by them, Mariada Raman addressed the following words to those present in Court. "Has there ever been seen such impudence on the part of a woman, who after stealing and eating up her neighbour's fowl, has the effrontery to appear in Court actually with a feather of the slaughtered fowl sticking on her head, and then to deny all knowledge of the crime imputed to her!" This game of bluff, fortunately, met with success, for as soon as the words reached her ears, the stupid thief fell headlong into the snare set for her, and imagining that she had been detected, at once, passed her hand over her head to see if the fowl's feather was sticking to it. This settled matters for Mariada Raman, who at once concluded that she had appro-

priated the stray fowl and subjecting her to a close interrogation, forced the truth from between her lips. He, therefore, inflicted a heavy fine upon the thief, who, in addition, was also ordered to compensate the owner for the loss of her fowl, and thus taught an abiding lesson that *magna est veritas et prevaleat.*

—: o :—

XVIII.

~~THE~~ DISHONEST KOMATI ENTRAPPED.

A BRAHMAN about to start on a pilgrimage, placed the savings of a life-time of beggary, amounting to 1,000 star pagodas, in a brass pot, and filling the vessel with dholl, carried it with the aid of his wife to the house of a Komati, in whom he reposed implicit confidence, and left it with him, with a request not to touch the contents, but to return it to him on his coming back. One night, there was an unexpected inflow of guests at the Komati's house, and as the stock of dholl in hand ran short, and it was too late to resort to the bazaar, the Komati bade his wife bring the brass pot left with him by the Brahman, intending to borrow therefrom what was urgently wanted, and

to replace it before the return of the Brahman. On the vessel being fetched and emptied of its contents, there fell a regular shower of star pagodas on the top of the dholl. The Komatis—husband and wife—were delighted at this unexpected find, and after appropriating both the dholl and the pagodas, filled the pot again up to the brim, as before but *minus* the pagodas. When the Brahman and his wife returned from their pilgrimage, and got back their deposit, they were dismayed to find that their gold had disappeared. They sat in stony amazement for a long while, and then went to the Komati and appealed to him, shrieking for all they were worth, in the most piteous and heart-rending tones to return their gold. Their expostulations, however, fell upon deaf ears, for the Komatis persisted in maintaining that they had returned the deposit intact, and knew

nothing about the gold. The Brahmans thereupon carried their tale of woe to Mariada Raman, who cast about in his mind for a way of arriving at the truth, and was at length inspired with a happy idea. He had recourse to the following artifice. He caused a huge wicker-work figure to be fashioned like a giant, and concealing a man within it bade the Komati and his wife carry the figure on their heads round a temple and swear to the truth of their allegations. The Komatis after bathing, lifted the wicker-frame on their heads and with trembling limbs ("conscience doth make such cowards of us all"), were carrying it round the temple. When they had come about half way round, the husband, who had by that time become a prey to indescribable fear, addressed the wife in these words:—"Alas! what have we done! We have been compelled to swear

to falsehood! I do not know what misfortunes would befall us on this account!" He thus unwarily, walked into the trap set for him by the Judge, little dreaming of the dire consequences of this outburst of compunction. The spy concealed within the wicker-frame, heard these words and reported them to Mariada Raman who thereupon extorted the truth from the lips of the Komatis—restored his gold to the Brahman, and punished the former suitably. Here was an instance of the saying that Heaven bears witness on the side of truth and justice.

XIX.

THE GRAIN-VENDOR BROUGHT TO HIS SENSES.

A CERTAIN merchant, in need of paddy, called upon a cultivator, who offered to sell the same, and asked for a sample. The vendor accordingly brought a Kuruni ($1\frac{1}{2}$ markals = 3 Madras measures) of paddy in a small basket. The merchant on seeing it asked if the vendor had any other paddy* to which the latter replied that he had not, and that he could give him no other paddy whether he bought for a single pagoda or for 10 pagodas. The merchant (concluding that all the paddy the vendor had was of the sort exhibited, advanced the vendor 10 pagodas, and proceeding to his

* Meaning any other sort.

house with his pack-bullock, required him to measure out his money's worth of paddy. The vendor offered him the same small basketful of paddy he had shown as a sample, and upon the merchant asking whether that was all he would give for 10 pagodas, answered him in the affirmative, and relied on his former statement, before the money was advanced, to the effect that he had *no other paddy*, * whether the purchase was to be for a single pagoda or for 10 pagodas. The merchant, finding him obstinately unyielding, complained to Mariada Raman, and the latter after questioning the parties, resolved to teach the Defendant a lesson in reason and common sense. He declared that it would take a month to pronounce a decision in the case, and that in the meantime, both Plaintiff and

* The vendor was trying to make out that what he meant was that he had *no more paddy* than that exhibited as a sample.

Defendant were to eat at one house, and at the former's expense. He bade the Plaintiff, after each meal, to give the Defendant (பாக்ஷதம்) *half the cooked rice.* He also sent for him in private, and advised him to take care that while he himself had a full meal, the Defendant got no more than the *half of a single grain of boiled rice*, and was thus practically kept without bite or sup, until he should turn more amenable to reason. The Plaintiff having scrupulously conformed to Mariada Raman's private advice, the Defendant who was having a very uncomfortable time of it, soon found himself in such case, that fearing a slow process of being starved to death, he complained to Mariada Raman. Questioned about it the Plaintiff declared that, in strict accordance with Mariada Raman's injunctions, he was giving Defendant half the rice (சுரதம்) that

was cooked, but that the latter would not eat it, while the Defendant urged that what was offered was only the half of a single grain of boiled rice and demanded to know how one was to live on it. The Plaintiff having retorted that he who could offer a small sample of paddy as 10 pagodas' worth, could not consistently complain if he was served with a half (*స్తుసు*) for a meal. Mariada Raman, thereupon, decreed that the Defendant should either give the Plaintiff reasonable *quid pro quo* for his money at market rates, or live upon such food as the latter chose to give him for the space of a month. The alternative proved such a "facer," that the Defendant was fain to climb down, sing small, and agree to give the merchant full value for his money. In this tale, was verified the saying, that what would not yield to the *suaviter in modus*

could be overcome by *the fortiter in rem*
or, in homelier language, that those who
will not *listen*, will have to *feel*.

XX.

THE EAR-RING THIEF UNMASKED.

WO travellers happened to sleep in a *chuttnam*, side by side, and facing each other. The one that lay on his left side, was a light fingered gentleman, and removed the left ear-ring of the other (who of course lay on his right side) and transferred it to his own right ear. The owner missing his ear-ring, and finding the other wearing it, taxed him with having stolen it, and the latter relying on the absence of evidence on either side, retorted by a similar accusation. Wrangling in this manner, both the disputants appeared before Mariada Raman. The owner of the ear-ring preferred his complaint, and the thief replied by a counter-complaint. Mariada Raman rose equal

to the occasion and called upon the parties to lie down in the same way as they had done at the *chutram*; and on their complying, he at once concluded who the thief was, for the defence theory was completely upset by the position of the parties. The Defendant having lain on his left side, it was of course impossible for any one to remove his left ear-ring without disturbing him. Having thus scented the truth, Mariada Raman caused the ear-ring to be restored to its owner, and sentenced the thief to six months' imprisonment and two dozen lashes. The latter, who richly deserved all he got, was very sorry that he had not lied more artistically, and most ruefully recognized his neglect of the maxim, that the liar must needs be consistent, in order to be believed.

XXI.

THE CATTLE THIEF DETECTED.

WO cow-herds had their cattle stands close to one another, and one of them, who had often occasion to absent himself, used to request the other to look after his herd during his absence. On one of these occasions, the resident cow-herd took advantage of the other's absence, and substituted three of his bull-calves for a similar number of his neighbour's heifers. Some time later, the absentee's herd was totally destroyed by cattle disease. He then fell upon evil days, was reduced to want, and was compelled to live by expedients. He, one day, begged the other to give him some milk to drink. Upon the latter offering him some, he at once declared that it

tasted like the milk of his cows, and charged the other before Mariada Raman with having stolen them. The thief, of course, denied the charge, and challenged the complainant to adduce evidence in support of his accusation. Asked how he could identify his cow from merely tasting its milk, the complainant answered that he had a peculiarly keen sense of taste, which enabled him to make the identification. Mariada Raman who naturally, desired to test so wildly improbable and incredible a story, and to judge whether absolute reliance can be placed on the Plaintiff's words, adjourned the case for 15 days, and in the meantime, caused three beds to be prepared with different kinds of manure, namely, cow-dung, sheep-dung, and rubbish, and sowed a crop of greens thereon. When the latter were ready to gather, he caused them to be cooked and served to the rival

claimants, together with curds prepared from a compound of cow's milk, sheep's milk and buffaloe's milk. The thief fell to with alacrity, ate the food voraciously, and pronounced it excellent; but the real owner turned up his nose at the repast, declared that the vegetables had been grown with three different kinds of manure, and the curds obtained from as many different sorts of milk. Mariada Ramaṇ, finding that the complainant did in reality possess the extraordinary sense of taste claimed by him, began to question the thief in a searching manner, when the latter at once confessed his guilt and, it is superfluous to add, received his due meed of punishment. Here was an illustration of the saying that, sooner or later, 'murder will out.'

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Tales of Tenalirāma.

The Famous Court Jester of Southern India.

BY

PANDIT S. M. NATESA SASTRI, B.A.
(*Member of the London Folklore Society.*)



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PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION.

Every nation, whether ancient or modern, has had, and continues to have, its own peculiar wit and humour. *Æsop's fables*, which were written 600 years before Christ, are, perhaps, the earliest existing examples of witty stories of the West intended to instruct mankind. Side by side with these fables similar stories have existed in India for imparting education. These, after undergoing great alterations, have been handed down to the present day in the *Punchatrantra*, *Hitopades'a* and *Kathasaritsagara*. In the sixth century A.D. the celebrated Sasanian King Nushirvan had these tales translated into Pahlavi and the Western nations copied these tales. This goes far to prove that India was the home of wit and humour.

Almost all Hindu monarchs have had jesters attached to their Courts. The names of Birbal and Bilhana are known to every one. Our present-day Zamindars maintain jesters to please them in their leisure hours. In almost every Sanskrit drama the fool acts a prominent part. The fool in the *Toy-cart* is a character whom every student of Indian literature should be proud to know. Thus the Court Jester is a very ancient institution and has not yet died out, as far as India is concerned.

Some of the Indian wits are great men who are still remembered for their works. Birbal was a great wit who flourished in the court of the Moghal Emperor Akbar and his sayings are current in Northern India. Tennalirama is the Birbal of Southern India; and his sayings are current in every South Indian household. He was a native of the village of Tenali, in the Kistna District, and flourished, according to popular legends, during the time of the great Vijayanagara King, Krishnadeva Raya, the Asoka of Southern India. The Vijayanagara Empire in his time comprised the whole of Southern India south of the Tunga-bhadra, extending along the eastern coast up to Vizagapatam. Timma Arasu was the great commander and minister under this Vijayanagar sovereign. King Krishnadeva and his minister Timma Arasu are known to the people of Southern India by the name of the *Rayar* and *Appaji*—*Rayar* being the sovereign and *Appaji* the minister. Krishnadeva was a great builder of temples and all the grand halls known as “thousand pillar mandapas” and the big front gopuras that we see at Conjeeveram, Chidambaram, Tiruvannamalai, Srirangam, Rames'varam, Jambukes'varam and other places were built by him. He was a great

patron of letters ; the cup-shaped coin known as the "Ramatanka" and generally believed for a long time to be the coin issued by the hero of the *Ramayana* was really the medal issued by this Vijayanagar monarch for presentation to learned men. He was a great conqueror and his journeys were always distinguished by rich benefactions to learning in various places in his victorious tours..

The majority of the Vijayanagara inscriptions on the walls of the South Indian Temples and the great portion of the Vijayanagara copper-plate grants belong to this monarch, and they give away villages, lands, privileges and gold to temples and to learned Brahmins. Most of the copper-plate grants of this monarch allude to the ceremony of *tulabhara*, i.e., his having weighed himself against gold in the scales and presented his weight in that metal to Brahmins. In every grant of his there is clear indication that he was a lover of justice and a patron of learning and the arts.

Tennalirama flourished in the court of this king and was his favourite jester. He is also said to have been a composer of Telugu verses. As usual with jesters everywhere, Tennalirama enjoyed many privileges in Krishnadeva's court. Many

practical jokes fathered upon this jester are extant in Southern India.

A Tamil book called *Tennaliraman Kathai* contains a collection of nineteen stories regarding him. Two of these are too vulgar for the cultivated taste and are omitted from this translation. Even the rest are scarcely up to the mark of a renowned court jester whose name has almost passed into a proverb. A few would even appear to be incredible, and their genuineness may be doubted. But such as they are, they are evidence of popular taste, and for that reason interesting.

Being intended to be a faithful rendering, the language of the book may show many lapses from good idiom and offend the cultured ear. I can only ask the indulgence of the reader, and trust that the book will please in spite of that defect.

I am extremely obliged to M.R.Ry. V. S. Sri-nivasa Sastriyar, B.A., Head Master of the Hindu High School, Triplicane, for the valuable assistance he has rendered to me in correcting the proofs when the book was passing through the press.

MADRAS.

S. M. NATESA SASTRI.



THE STORY OF TENNALIRAMA..

I.

BECOMING A PROFESSIONAL JESTER.

IN the northern country there is a village named Tennali. In it was born a Brahman boy named Râma. Once a *Sanyâsi** met this boy in the street and wondering at his beauty and rare qualities, taught him a certain incantation and said:—"My dear fellow, if you, in the course of a single night, repeat this incantation in the presence of the goddess Kâli three crores of times, she will appear before you with her one thousand faces. If you be not overcome with fear of her presence, you can secure from her whatever boons you may desire." From that day Râma was waiting for an

auspicious time to go to the Kâli temple near his village. And duly as the time came, he stood before the goddess and repeated the incantation as he had been taught. At the end Kâli appeared before him with her one thousand faces, two hands and fearful shape. The little fellow, however, was not at all afraid, but laughed at the goddess. Whereupon Kâli asked him in a stern voice, "Why do you laugh?" And Râma replied :—"Mother, we men have each but one nose and two hands; yet when we catch cold, we find it very difficult to blow our single nose with our two hands. If ever you, who have one thousand noses, should suffer from cold, I wonder how little those two hands will avail you!" Pleased at the lad's wit, the goddess said "Ah boy! inasmuch as you have jested with me you shall from this day become a jester—*Vikatakavi*." And the boy said readily "Mighty goddess,

you have given me a very fine boon. If I read my title from right to left I am a jester, and if from left to right, I am a jester still.* The goddess was all the more pleased at this and said:—

“For your intelligence you shall be a court-jester and all in the king's assembly shall ever praise you for your wit.” After having said so, the goddess vanished. And Râma ever since that day attained more and more celebrity as a jester and at last reached the court of *Rayar*† and continued to live there.

* The Tamil word for jester—வித்தவி—reads the same from left to right or from right to left, like the English word *level*.

† The *Rayar*. King Krishnadeva Râya of the Vijayanagar family who reigned about the beginning of the 16th century A.D. at Hampi.



II.

ESCAPING FROM THE PUNISHMENT OF BEING TRAMPLED BY AN ELE- PHANT.

ONE day Tennâlirâma incurred the extreme displeasure of the *Râyar* for overdoing his part. The *Râyar* was much enraged and condemned Tennâlirâma to be trampled by an elephant. The servants of the palace took him to an open plain outside the city, dug a deep pit and buried him in it, leaving only his face projecting above ground. They then returned to the city to fetch an elephant for treading over the criminal's head. In the interval a hump-backed washerman happened to pass that way, and he asked the jester "Why, sir, do you stand thus buried?" Tennâlirâma replied:—"I have had a bad hump-back for a very long time. To make my body

straight, a doctor left me buried here thus. I have lost my curve and become straight now. You can dig me up and see for yourself whether it is so or not." The washerman did accordingly, and not seeing any bend in the jester's body, begged to be buried in the pit, so that his body might become erect too. Tennâlirâma was not slow to comply with this request, and returned to the *Râyar* with the washerman's bundle. The *Râyar* asked :—" How now ! Tennâlirâma here ! Did I not order you to be trampled to death ? " The jester replied with a cool obeisance :—" So it was ordered, but an honest washerman has obligingly taken my place, and left this bundle in my keeping." The *Râyar* laughed heartily and excused his jester.

III.

ESCAPING FROM THE PUNISHMENT OF BEING CUT OFF BY THE SWORD.

A NOTHER day Tennâlirâma committed a serious blunder in jesting, and the *Râyar* was much enraged. He sent for two soldiers, and making over the jester to them, he said: "Here! take this knave out of our presence, and cut off his head by your swords." The soldiers carried him off accordingly, and as they were preparing for their cruel act, he spoke gently to them:—"Anyhow you are both to cut me off. For the good of my soul, however, in the other world, you must allow me to go to yonder tank. I shall stand neck-deep in the water and in that position contemplate God for one *Muhûrta** while you both watch me with

* $1\frac{1}{2}$ hours.

drawn swords each on one side. When my contemplation is over each will take aim at the same instant, and cut off my neck with one full sweep of his sword.' They agreed to do so : and he went and stood thus in the tank, and when the swords were being aimed at his neck from both sides, he suddenly went down into the water, and the sword of each soldier cut off the head of the other. Without losing much time, Tennâlirâma stood in the presence of the *Râjar* and to his astonished queries, only offered this brief explanation : " The clumsy fellows ! they killed each other, and let me escape."

IV.

APPEARING WITH HIS HEAD
CONCEADED.

• **A**NOTHER time Tennâlirâma carried his jesting too far, and the *Râyar* said in anger; “Wretch! do not show your hated head any more here, or it will be off!” The jester withdrew at once, but re-appeared presently with his head hidden in a large-mouthed water-pot. The whole court laughed aloud, and the *Râyar* too joined the laugh, on hearing the jester’s defence uttered from within the strange hood: “I trust my hated head does not offend your eye any more.”



V.

GETTING THE SENTRYIES WHIPPED.

ONCE there came to the *Rāyar's* court certain Bhagavata dancers* from the Teluga country. The *Rāyar* ordered a dance in the palace and gave orders to the sentries at the two gates not to let in *Tennālirāma*. When the dance was going on inside, *Tennālirāma* went to the first sentry and said: "Only allow me to go in. I shall give you half of what I get." He allowed him. And he said the same to the second sentry and thus went in. Then, taking out a churning-dasher, which he had brought with him concealed, he struck the dancer who was

* A set of religious people who sing and dance and enact the scenes of Krishna's life as depicted in the *Bhāgavata*. This institution has gone out of vogue totally now, and has been replaced by what are called *Kālakshepas*, in which some religious story is expounded to the devout listeners with a little singing and sometimes dancing.

playing the part of God Krishna. The actor set up a cry of pain—"Aiyo!" And Tennalirama remarked "Fie! Is this man Krishna? He is said to have received several blows from the churn-dashers of many neat-herd maids. But how is it that you are not able to bear one single blow from my dasher?" On seeing him, the *Rāyar* said: "How did he come in? Give him 24 stripes with a whip." Thus ordered he; and when the jester was being led out to receive the stripes he asked the second sentry, "Have you not consented to receive half of what I get?" And he said "True, so I have." "I have received for present 24 stripes. And half of it—12 stripes—you should receive" Thus saying, he had the second sentry whipped, and also saw that the first sentry received the other 12, himself escaping without one.

VI.

OBTAINING ABSOLUTE LICENSE TO MAKE JOKES.

ONE day Tenuālirāma thought within himself—"However clever I may be, as the *Rāyar* and his preceptor often get out of temper on account of my jests, I may any day get into serious trouble and even lose my life. Therefore, it is safe to be provided beforehand with some means of escape." Thus thinking he went to the preceptor of the *Rāyar*, and feigning great attachment to him for some days, secured his confidence. Then he said to the preceptor :—"From the northern country, there have come to my house a man and his wife. How can I describe the beauty of that woman? I do not believe that there is any woman

equal to her in all the fifty-six countries."* Hearing this the preceptor said : " Will you contrive to introduce me to her ?" The jester said : " Her husband is always with her and so it is very difficult. But if you attire yourself like a woman and come to my house after the 10th *ndlikai*,† I shall, without arousing any suspicion in her husband's mind, arrange an interview between you." After this he said the same thing to the *Rāyar*—that a woman

* In Hindu Geography 56 countries are enumerated. They are :—

- (1) Angam ; (2) Arunam ; (3) Avanti ; (4) Andhram ;
- (5) Hadam ; (6) Ottiyam ; (7) Karusam ; (8) Kalingam ;
- (9) Kannadam ; (10) Kannādam ; (11) Kasam ;
- (12) Kasmiram ; (13) Kāndāram ; (14) Kambojam ;
- (15) Kiratam ; (16) Kuruku ; (17) Kudakam ; (18) Kuntalam ; (19) Kuru ; (20) Kulindam ; (21) Kureharam ;
- (22) Kekayam ; (23) Keralam (24) Konkanam ; (25) Kollam ; (26) Kosalam ; (27) Sakaśi ; (28) Saviram ; (29) Salavam ; (30) Singalam ; (31) Sindu ; (32) Sinam ; (33) Surasenam ; (34) Solam ; (35) Sonsakam ; (36) Diravidam ;
- (37) Tuluvam ; (38) Tenganam ; (39) Nidadam ; (40) Nepalam ; (41) Papparam ; (42) Pallavam ; (43) Panchalam ; (44) Pandiyam ; (45) Pulindam ; (46) Podam ; (47) Magadam ; (48) Machcham ; (49) Maratam ; (50) Malaiyalam ; (51) Malavam ; (52) Yavanam ; (53) Yugundham ;
- (54) Vangam ; (55) Vangalam ; (56) Vidarbhām.

† *Ndlikai* in Tamil is the same as *Ghatikā* in Sanskrit—24 minutes. 10th *Ndlikai* is 10 o'clock.

had come to his house, &c., &c.,—exactly as he had said to the preceptor. The *Rāyar* said: "Then such a woman must be of service to me for once at least." The jester said: "You had better come to my house to-night after the 15th *ndlikai** putting on the dress of a woman. I shall, before that time, have got everything ready." The preceptor came at the fixed time. The jester arranged a cot and a cushion in a room and made him lie there. The *Rāyar* came after. The jester took him to that very room and said:—"The woman about whom I spoke is in this room. You can go in." As soon as he saw the *Rāyar* well in, the jester closed the door and secured it on the outside. And inside when the men met with amorous intentions each taking the other to be a woman, the *Rāyar* came to know his preceptor, and the

* 12 o'clock.

preceptor the *Rāyar*. Both were ashamed. They became furious with Tennalirama and asked 'him' to open the door. He would not do so for a very long time. At last they spoke sweet words and implored him. Then Tennalirama said to both of them :—“ Whatever faults I may commit from to-day with regard to either or both of you, if you both promise, in the name of God, to excuse those faults up to the limit of a hundred for each day, I shall open the door.” And they both solemnly swore to the effect. Then Tennalirama opened the door and sent them away with many apologies.”

VII.

CAUTERIZATION OF BRAHMANS.

WHEN the mother of the *Rāyar* was about to die, she wanted a mango fruit to eat; but before it was brought she expired. The *Rāyar* was very sorry that he was not able to fulfil the last wishes of his mother, and sending for some Brāhmans, he said to them:—"My mother set her heart on a mango fruit but died before it was given her. By what means can I appease her soul?" To this, they replied:—"If you make mango fruits of gold and present them as gifts to Brāhmans on the occasion of the annual ceremony of your mother, her soul will be pacified." The *Rāyar* believed it and made the gifts accordingly. Next day Tennalirāma invited to his house all those Brāhmans who had

received such gifts saying that the annual ceremony of his mother was taking place in his house. There he heated the handle of an iron ladle and cauterized each guest in two places. They all went away weeping and reported the matter to the *Rāyar*. The *Rāyar* sent for Tennalirama and said, "Why did you do this outrageous act?" He said: "My mother in her last moments was suffering from convulsions in her hands and feet. Cauterizing was recommended. But before the hot handle of the iron ladle could be brought she expired. To appease her soul, I acted in this manner." On hearing this explanation the *Rāyar* laughed long and loud.

VIII.

REARING A COLT.

THE *Rāyar* got a supply of colts and distributed them all in his town at the rate of one colt for each house. He also ordered that every one who got a colt should receive three pagodas monthly for grass, gram and drugs for bringing up the colt. Thus every one received a colt and began to bring up the animal excellently. *Tennâlirâma* alone raised a small room shut up on all sides. He left the colt at large in that room and opened a gap in the wall just opposite to its face, and inside the room he dug up a small pit. Every morning he went near this room with a handful of grass and fed the animal through the slit by his own hands, and he poured a little water in the pit inside the room himself. He did this in

the evening also. In this way he converted the three pagodas which he received monthly for rearing the colt to his own use.

After three years the *Rāyar* ordered all the townsfolk to bring and exhibit their colts. They brought their colts as ordered. All the colts were fat and fleshy with shiny hair—some skipping, some dancing and some jumping and running. *Tennalirāma* alone did not bring the colt that had been given to him. The *Rāyar* called him and asked: “Why have you not brought your animal?” And he replied “No one can approach and catch hold of my colt. If you will give me the help of the best of the Muhammadans* under you, I shall go and fetch my colt.” And the *Rāyar* gave him the desired help. The Muhamma-

* *Ravuttan* in the original is vulgar Tamil for a Muhammadan. It also means a *lubbai*—a recent convert to Islamism.

dan chosen for this duty had a slender beard one cubit long. The jester took him to where the colt was and asked him to look at it through the gap. The Muhammadan did so, thrusting his face in the gap. The colt thought that grass was being offered to it, and bounding suddenly caught hold of the Muhammadan's beard.

The Muhammadan began to cry aloud "Allah! Allah!" Tenpâlirâma ran to the *Râyar* at once and said: "The colt has caught hold of your Muhammadan and will not leave him off: the poor man is crying piteously." The *Râyar* went to the spot accompanied by Appâji* and saw how the colt had caught hold of the Muhammadan's beard, and how the poor man struggled with pain. When the wall was pulled down, the beard was easily released; but what was the *Râyar's*

* See Preface.

astonishment to see that the colt that had caused so much trouble was scarcely able to stand on its legs ! It was plain that Tennâlirâma had not been feeding the animal properly ; and the *Râyar* demanded sternly which way the monthly allowance had gone. But Tennâlirâma knew how to answer readily. " You see how unmanageable the colt is, even when so sparingly fed ; your strongest Muhammadan is unable to control it. If it should be well fed, I wonder whom you can find to keep and drive it." The audacity of the answer astonished the *Râyar* out of his anger, and he and the others laughed till they nearly split their sides.

IX.

REARING A KITTEN.

THE *Rāyar* gave to each house in his town a kitten and a cow, and ordered that each kitten should be reared on the milk of the cow. Like others, Tennālirāma received a cow and a kitten. All the householders milked their cows and gave the whole yield to their kittens. But Tennālirāma on the very first day milked his cow and placed it boiling-hot near the kitten. It eagerly placed its mouth in the vessel and got scalded. From that day forward the kitten used to run away the moment it saw the milk. Tennālirāma then consumed the entire milk of the cow which had been intended for the kitten. After six months, the *Rāyar* ordered all the kittens to be brought that he might see them. And of all the kittens Tennāli-

rāma's alone was very lean. It appeared to be almost dying. "Why has this grown so lean?" asked the *Rāyar*. "It runs away at sight of milk ; what can I do ?" said Tennalirāma. The *Rāyar* at once ordered some milk to be offered to it in his presence. And when it saw the milk it became afraid and ran away. The *Rāyar* ordered it to be caught, and on examining it he saw half of its mouth scalded. But he was pleased with the joke, and laughed as he said . "There is a proverb which says that the scalded cat never approaches the hearth. Even so, you have once placed hot milk before it and made it dread the very sight of milk."



X.

PROFITING BY THE LABOUR OF THIEVES.

ONE night Tennalirāma came to know that six thieves were in the back part of his house and that they were only waiting for a proper opportunity to enter in and rob. He soon went into the several rooms and safely secured all the money, jewels, silk cloths and other things. He then called his wife and said loud enough for the thieves to hear: "As there is now much fear of thieves in this city, we shall keep all our property in a big box and take it out again after the fear is over." Then he filled up a big box with stones and blocks. Then he himself, his wife and his son, all the three, carried the box to a well which was in a garden outside the house and threw it

into the well with a heavy splash. The thieves, who had carefully observed all this and were thoroughly taken in, said to themselves: "It is not necessary for us now to get into the house. We shall descend into the well and carry away the box. How easy they have made it for us!" And with great eagerness one of them got into the well, but on examining, found the water very deep, and said that if some of the water was baled out, they could easily take up the box. They all agreed to it. There were two picottahs with watering pots in that well. They divided themselves into two parties of three each, and went to work at the picottahs. And Tennalirama got into the garden unobserved and went on opening or closing the mouths of the small channels which conveyed the water to the several patches of land in which plantain, areca-nut, lime, orange, citron,

cocoanut and other trees were planted and saw to the proper distribution of the water. And as the water in the well never went down, the thieves went on bailing out water throughout the night. When the day was about to dawn, Ten-nâlirâma cried aloud : , "The whole garden has been well watered. You may leave off the picottahs now." On hearing it, the thieves ran away, glad to be let off so easily.

XI.

A GREAT DOCTOR OF SCIENCES OVER-
THROWN.

ONE day a learned man named *Vidyâsâgara** versed in several sciences came to the court of the *Râyar*. All the learned men in the *Râyar's* court were seized with fear and applied to Tennâlirâma in their difficulty : " There is a vast difference between his proficiency and our proficiency. If he conquers us in debate, it will be a great shame to all of us, and the *Râyar* will then disregard us. What shall we do ? " Tennâlirâma said : " You need not fear. I shall contrive some means to foil him. "

Then, on a certain day, that learned man—*Vidyâsâgara*—came to the *Râyar's* assembly for a disputation. Tennâlirâma

* The ocean of knowledge.

had previously made up a bundle of the dried twigs of the sesamum plant arranged in the shape of a palm leaf book ; and he had tied this book with the rope which is generally used in tying buffaloes. This volume he had tied up in a piece of cloth. With this bundle he came and sat before that doctor of all sciences. On seeing the (supposed) volume the doctor asked : " What is the name of this book ? " and Tennâlirâma said : " This is the book named *Sesamum-twig-dried-buffalo-bandage.*" On hearing this the doctor was much perplexed and thought to himself : " What ? after having mastered so many sciences, it is a wonder that we have not even heard of the name of this book." While he was thus lost in thinking, Tennâlirâma asked the pandit : " You bear the reputation of having read all the sciences. Have you never come across this great science ? " To this he replied :

"I shall answer you to-morrow" and went away to the place where he was staying. He considered the matter long and anxiously, and at last came to a decision: "We are not able to understand even the title of the book. How, then, can we know the subjects treated of in it? We must needs incur shame if we continue to stay here." So he decamped in the morning long before the day dawned. And when the *Râyar* heard that the doctor of all the sciences had decamped even without taking formal leave, he sent for Tennâlirâma and asked him how he had put that great doctor to flight. The jester said: "By means of this book—*Sesamum-twigs-dried-buffalo-bandage.*"

"Untie that book," said the *Râyar*. He did so. And when the *Râyar* saw that dried sesamum twigs were tied up by the rope generally used for tying up buffaloes, he understood the meaning of the several

words and laughed saying: "I see, it was by a combination of all these words that you contrived to send away the pandit."

AN UNSUCCESSFUL CONVERSION.

THE preceptor of the *Râyar* thought that if Tennâlirâma was converted into a disciple of his, he would behave very respectfully towards him. So the preceptor instructed Tennâlirâma in the doctrines of Vaishnavaism and said : " If you receive the branding on your shoulders and become a Vaishnava, I shall, through my influence with the *Râyar*, get all the things that you require done.* On hearing this Tennâlirâma said : " O my master ! There is nothing I desire more than this. I am always ready to obey your orders." Satisfied that the

* Every true follower of the Vaishnava religion—the Srivaishnavites and the Mâdhvas—receive these marks on their shoulders from the heads of their several mutts. The Smartas have no branding. A fee equal to one or two months' wages is collected by the Guru from every one who is thus branded and the branding takes place only after the payment.

preceptor was taken in by his pretences, he continued "O my master! I want urgently a thousand pagodas now. You must get me that amount at once, and on the day on which I receive the branding as an emblem of my becoming a votary of Vishnu, you must undertake the cost of feeding* the Brâhmaṇis. I shall pay only one fanam as my fee for the preceptor." The preceptor agreed to all this, as he thought that it was a very cheap price to pay for such a convert. He fixed an early day, ordered all the provisions and sent for Tennâlirâma. He came, bathed, wrapped his body in clean clothes, bowed down before the preceptor, went through the whole of the preliminary ceremony before the priest and sat down in apparent devotion to be branded. But scarcely had the instru-

* In addition to the fee paid to the Guru, the devotee has to feed a certain number of Brâhmaṇis at his own cost on the day on which he receives the branding and before the branding takes place.

ment touched one of his shoulders before he jumped up crying “Aiyo !” and beating his mouth and belly with his hands, ran off to some distance saying frequently, “Half a fanam’s worth of branding is quite enough !” To the numerous enquirers who crowded round, Tennalirama gave this explanation of his strange conduct. “This priest told me that I should know real happiness and pleasure if I became a Vaishnava. I promised to give him one fanam. He branded me on one of my shoulders. As the pain is unbearable I am running away fearing that he may apply the brand to the other shoulder also. I have told him that I shall be content to be branded for half a fanam.” Every one there laughed aloud. And the priest, seeing the deception that had been practised upon him, became ashamed and hung down his head.

XIII.

• A GREAT POET DISGRACED.

A certain learned man composed a poem in praise of the *Rājarāma*. He had never treated *Tennalirāma* with respect, but always slighted him. One day a public reading of the work was ordered: and when some verses had been read, the reader paused, apparently unable to proceed, for the next verse was wanting in one foot. The omission was indicated in the manuscript by a mark at the right place, but was not supplied on that page or on any of the next five pages which were too closely written. On the sixth page, however, the same mark appeared and under it the missing foot. The poet then directed his attention to the sixth

page and asked him to read from there. So the verse was read and the discussion ended then. And the poet presented himself in the *Rāyar's* assembly the next day to receive his prize. Of course, Ten-nālirāma was there too. He had got his crown entirely shaved, leaving only two or three short stumps of hair in the place of the lock of hair on his head: this he had removed and now kept it separately by his side. When all was ready, he took his seat in front of the poet, and as the *Rāyar* turned round to where he was, he removed his turban, and after touching with his fingers the stumps of hair on his head, went on arranging the lock of hair which was beside him. The *Rāyar* on seeing this asked him: "What is this?" And he replied:—"While getting shaved, I ordered that the lock of hair on my head should be removed. But I soon changed

my mind, and as it was not altogether too late, I ordered a few stumps to be left in the right place as a mark (of omission) intending to bear the lock about me separately. And it is a course of action approved by poets and learned men." The *Kâyar* questioned: "How do you say approved by them?" To this he replied: "This learned man who now sits in your presence was exhibiting his work yesterday. What was wanting in a verse on a certain page, he supplied from what was written on the sixth page from that. My action, therefore, has a worthy precedent." The poet was much ashamed and hung down his head while the *Râyar* and the whole court laughed.

XIV.

A WRESTLER DECEIVED.

THERE was a wrestler named Atis'ura.* He had conquered the wrestlers of various courts and came to the kingdom of the *Rāyar* with many badges.† All the wrestlers in the kingdom of the *Rāyar* took alarm and were in a great fix. Tennalirāma saw this and asked them why they were so dispirited. They said: "Up to this time we have been living under this Mahārāja with respect. Now the time has come for us to lose our respect and our living also. A wrestler has come to reduce us to this position. What shall we do?" Tennalirāma said :

* Atis'ura=the most valorous.

† Presented by the several kings in whose courts he conquered the wrestlers.

“Have no fear. Give me all your badges and follow me as your chief.” He then put on all the badges, and assuming the name of Virakesari,* took up his position with his followers in a tent opposite to that of Atis’ûra. That wrestler thought within himself: “This chief seems to be my rival. Let me first of all ascertain his merit.” So he sent word to Virakesari that he had come to see him. And Tennâlirâma sent back the following message: “You need not come here now. You can make known your business in the *Râyar*’s presence to-morrow.” Atis’ûra, on hearing this, was much afraid at heart, thinking “What sort of wrestler may he be?” Next day the *Râyar* permitted Atis’ûra and Virakesari to wrestle in his presence. Then Virakesari asked Atis’ûra: “Is your method of wrestling the scientific method or the physical-force method?”

* Lion of valour.

Atis'ûra replied: "It is the scientific method." And then Virakesari said: "I shall show you some symbols of the scientific method of wrestling. If you explain what those symbols mean, I shall deem it proper to wrestle with you." Atis'ûra said: "Let it be so." Thereupon, Virakesati joined together the three middle fingers of Atis'ûra's hand, and hit his own chest with them,* placed his adversary's two palms extended on his own shoulders,† described a circle round his neck with the front finger,‡ showed his right palm hanging upside down up to the hip,§ and waved his left

* This was what the jester meant when he joined together the three middle fingers of Atis'ûra's hand and directed them against his own chest.

† This was what Tennâlirâma indicated when he brought on his own shoulders the two extended palms of Atis'ûra.

‡ Describing a circle round the neck means a wife in the language of the deaf and dumb among the Hindus, as a woman becomes wife by the marriage badge or *tali* being tied by the husband round her neck.

§ The symbol of the right palm suspended up to the hip indicates child by the short height from the ground.

fist.* The wrestler saw all these symbols, but could make nothing of them. He thought over all the symbols that he had learnt in wrestling, but in vain. Having waited for some time, Tennâlirâma snatched from him all the badges which he had acquired in other places and, sounding his victorious drum, entered his tent. The next day the *Râyar* asked : “Tennâlirâma ! What is the meaning of those symbols which you displayed yesterday ?” And Tennâlirâma, showing those symbols again, explained† “Atis’ûra ! If I approach you, you will pierce me with your dagger in my chest and kill me. I shall then drop down stretched on the ground with my face upwards ‡ Then who will

* Waving the left first is questioning.

† This was what the jester meant when he joined together the three middle fingers of Atis’ûra’s hand and directed them against his own chest.

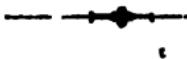
‡ This was what Tennâlirâma indicated when he brought on his own shoulders the two extended palms of Atis’ûra.

protect ?* my wife† and child."‡ On hearing this the *Rāyan* laughed heartily.

* Describing a circle round the neck means a wife in the language of the deaf and dumb among the Hindus, as a woman becomes wife by the marriage badge or *tali* being tied by the husband round her neck.

† The symbol of the eight palm suspended up to the hip indicates *child* by the short height from the ground.

‡ Waving the left first is questioning.



XV.

CONVERTING A BLACK DOG INTO A WHITE DOG.

ONE day the *Rāyar* was sleeping even after the fourth *nakkai** from sunrise. And as it was the day for him to get himself shaved, the barber came, but finding him asleep, shaved him so carefully that he did not wake up, and then went away. The *Rāyar* on rising saw himself in the mirror, and when he observed how nicely the shaving had been done, he was very much delighted. He sent for the barber and asked him what he wanted. He replied, "My lord! you must make me a Brāhman" The *Rāyar* then sent for several Brāhmans and said to them:—"If, within six months, you do

not convert this barber into a Brâhman and eat meals with him, allowing him to sit in your company, I shall confiscate all the lands given in free gift to you" The Brâhmâns felt much aggrieved at heart, but said outwardly "Mahârâja's orders will be obeyed :" and took away the barber. They made him bathe thrice daily, and taught him to offer oblations in the sacred fire, perform the morning and other prayers, and pronounce the holy incantations and other such things. At the end of the sixth month, the *Râdayar* went to the Brâhman street to see whether the barber was allowed to eat his food in the company of the Brâhmâns.* When they came to know of this, they went to Tennâlirâma for help. He said : " You need not be afraid. I shall save you all."

* The Brâhmâns had not yet given the last privilege of allowing the barber to eat in their company. If they had done so, they would have totally lost their caste. So they resorted to Tennâlirâma who saved them.

He then procured a black dog and led it by a rope round its neck to the side of a tank near the Brâhman street. There he kindled a fire in a sacrificial pit, and performed certain rites over it with the assistance of four Brâhman priests. Then he caused the dog to be bathed, notwithstanding its unbearable barking, and dragged it struggling and yelling piteously round the sacred fire. Again he caused the dog to be dipped in water and again he dragged it round the fire, while the poor animal kept barking incessantly. While he was thus engaged, the *Râyar* came up and asked: "Why do you treat this dog thus?" Tennâlirâma replied, "I intend making this black dog a white one." The *Râyar* called him a madman and bade him desist from the impossible attempt. Tennâlirâma promptly replied: "When a barber can become a Brâhman why cannot a black dog be-

come a white dog?" The *Rāyar* felt that the rebuke was just and returned to the palace without going to the Brâhman street, where there were great rejoicings.

XVI.

A NOVEL MODE OF PAINTING.

THE *Rāyar* built a storied house in beautiful style. He then sent for a painter and ordered him to prepare suitable pictures for the mansion. After finishing his work, the painter intimated the fact to the *Rāyar*. The *Rāyar* proceeded to that house accompanied by his ministers and others, and as he was going through the several parts of that house admiring the work all along, *Tennālirkāma* noticed a picture which was painted sideways. And he asked "Great King ! This picture displays the limbs of only one side. Where are those of the other side ? " To this the *Rāyar* said : " You must imagine it all. 'Don't you know

this?" And as he said so, he laughed. "Yes, I understand it now" said Tennalirâma in apparent sincerity. Some time after Tennalirâma said to the *Râyar* one day: "From the day we visited your new mansion, I have been practising painting. I have become an expert in it now. You must witness my beautiful execution now." "Indeed!" said the *Râyar*; and as the paintings in his palace had become old, he added: "You can then rub away all these old paintings and execute new ones in their places." He then gave him betel-leaf and nuts* for the work, vacated that house, and removed to another building. Tennalirâma then rubbed away all the beautiful original paintings. He painted a nail in one place, a finger in another place, a hand in a third; thus in his own way he filled the whole house with his daubs and spoil-

* Hindu method of closing a bargain or contract.

ed its look utterly.. He then went to the *Rāyar* and said : "I have finished all my paintings. You must kindly favour me with a visit." The *Rāyar*, taking it to be true, entered the building accompanied by several people On seeing the pictures, he said: "What ! Tennâlirâma! I see only odd limbs and fragments." Tennâlirâma said : " You must imagine all the other portions to exist on the other side. What ! have you forgotten that obvious thing ? " The *Rāyar* exclaimed " O ! I have been deceived. You have spoiled the whole building." He was at the same time much ashamed and returned to his palace in anger.

XVII.

THE RAYAR'S SINCERITY TESTED.

TENNALIRAMA appeared to be very sorry one day, and the *Rayar* on seeing him said : " Why are you sorry ? What do you want ? " Tennalirama replied " Alas ! The astrologers have said that I shall die in the course of a month or two. But I am not at all thinking of my life now. I am only grieving that after I am gone there will be none to protect my family as I have been protecting it. " The *Rayar* spoke, " Do not at all be anxious about it. I shall protect your family ten times more carefully than you have been doing. This is not at all a great affair. " Thus the *Rayar* consoled him. Then Tennalirama pretended to get worse daily

and at last contrived to spread a rumour that he was no more. He had already secured in a safe place all the money, jewels and vessels that were in his box and put himself into that big box. As soon as the *Rāyar* heard that Tennalirama was dead, he sent some soldiers and ordered them to bring away at once the jester's money box, expecting to find in it a large fortune. And they accordingly brought it to the palace. The moment it came, the *Rāyar*, with great avarice, opened the box and looked in. On seeing Tennalirama there, he exclaimed : "What! they all said that you were dead." Tennalirama said : "How can I die confiding in you? Are you the person who will protect my family?" The *Rāyar* was ashamed and remained silent.

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INTRODUCTION.



IT is within every person's experience to enjoy with all attention the tales told by his grand old dames, to climb their knees, to share the envied kiss. There is hardly anybody, I think, who does not look back with fond attachment to those home associations, with those innocent sweet simple pleasures, whence first we started into life's long race. We feel them, while the wings of fancy still are free, even in age and at our latest day. While the unthinking mind is satisfied with these grandmothers' tales, as such, the thinking mind goes a step further and endeavours to gather knowledge from these tales of childhood. There are a good many to whom familiarity breeds contempt, and who, in blissful ignorance, scoff at folk-lore. But the ethnologist cannot fail to regard it as a *sine qua non* of the study of the racial development. There are many in whom grandeur hears with a disdainful smile these short and simple annals of the poor. But it ought not to be forgotten that these

cottages of the poor turn out to be the very nurseries of the wisdom and knowledge which the world has accumulated.

Bare facts of history are not sufficient for the serious ethnologist. There are limits to the historian's survey of the world. "Thus far shalt thou go, and no further" can be applied to history as to other departments of knowledge as well. When, therefore, history tries to disdain the limits of its little reign, it calls in the assistance of folk-lore, archaeology, phrenology, etc., etc. Though folk-lore appears to be a very much neglected branch of science, it takes the place of history during the times when there are no records, by throwing a world of light on the manners, customs and religious and social condition of the people whose folk-lore it is. We all know that every good is not without alloy, and that the visible Nature and this common world is so created that the two things—evil and good—co-exist. We cannot get any knowledge in a concentrated form. If this be something like a universal law of our present condition, if knowledge, for example, cannot be obtained except by hard and often painful application, if health can be secured only by

those who are content to pay the price of steady exercise and strict temperance for it, we need not be surprised if the folk-lorean study is by no means a purely easy affair, one that can be learnt at first sight. Indian folk-lore presents very often a thick net-work of the natural and the supernatural, which exerts a peculiar talismanic influence on the listener. This blending of the natural and the supernatural has taken possession of the Telugu mind to a very great extent, so much so that the ordinary Telugu person fully believes that there can be no gloomier form of infidelity than that which questions the moral attributes of that Great Being in Whose hands lie the final destinies of us all. His ideas of God's dealings with man are so peculiar to himself that none, but those intimately acquainted with him can rightly understand them.

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FOULK-LORE OF THE TELUGUS.

I.

An Unseasonable Advice.

In the country of Kandahar,* a certain king, Mahavira by name, at a great expense, caused a tank to be dug two palm-trees deep and a *yojana* wide and constructed a bank around it. But all the water in it dried up notwithstanding a heavy rainfall. The king, seeing that no water remained in the tank he had constructed at so great an expense, was sitting on the bank with a grieved heart, when one Erlunda Mumti passed that way. The king immediately rose, went and prostrated himself before the sage, seated him and began to converse with him; when the sage, looking at the sorrowful countenance of the king, asked him the reason for it. To which the king replied :—

“Sir, I had this tank dug at an enormous expense, but not a drop of water remains in it, and this is why I am feeling grieved.”

* This name in folk-tales, I think, represents always some part of Rajputana.—(Ed. Ind. Ant.)

The sage replied:—“Why weep for this? If you mix boiled rice with the blood of a courageous and liberal king, or with the blood from the throat of a revered *yogi* endowed with all virtuous qualities and offer it to Durga, whose temple is very near the tank, I dare say that the water will never dry and that the tank will be as full as the ocean.”

The king heard these words and thought of the difficulty of getting a king answering the description. Then he thought that the sage himself answered the purpose excellently well, being endowed with all the necessary qualities. So he drew his sword, cut the sage’s throat, mingled his blood with boiled rice and made the necessary offering to Durga. From that day forward, the rain stopped in the tank and it was full to the brim.

Those, therefore, who tender advice to kings must do so in season, for otherwise they will assuredly come to grief.



•II.

• The King and the Wrestler.

While king Nandana was wielding sway over Malabar, a wrestler approached him and said that he had toiled hard and learnt the art of fencing and other similar arts, could fight with wild animals and could even walk with a huge mountain on his head. But he had found no one except the king, who could give him the wages due to his powers. He had come, therefore, to the king's presence to represent his grievances and earn a proper livelihood. The king heard him and thought that such a warrior would be serviceable to him and engaged his services for a hundred pagodas a month.

There was a huge mountain near the city infested with wild beasts which were causing great havoc among the people. The king, therefore, sent for the wrestler and said :—" You declared, you know, that you could carry a mountain on your shoulders. A mountain there is in the neighbourhood, which is the cause of much suffering to the people. Take it away to a distant spot and return hither."

The wrestler promised obedience and on the next day, at dawn, the king took him with his

ministers, priest and a retinue of soldiers to the vicinity of the mountain. The wrestler girded up his waistband, tied his turban and stood ready. The king saw him and asked him why he hesitated, and called upon him to take the mountain on his head and go.

The wrestler replied :—" Sir, I humbly gave you to understand that I could carry the mountain on my head, but I did not say that I could lift it up. Kindly command your soldiers, therefore, to tear the mountain up and place it on my head and I will then carry it to whatever place you may command me."

III.

The Old Woman, the Cock and the Chafing Dish.

In the village of Pennagarai, on the road from Conjeeveram to Wandiwash, there lived an old woman who had a chafing dish and a cock. Day after day at early morn, when the first streaks of light were visible, the cock would crow. All the villagers would then rise, procure fire at her house and go their ways. This state of affairs had run on for a long time, till the old dame took into her head that the day dawned because her cock

crew. She observed that all the villagers cooked and ate after getting fire from her house and she wanted to see how the day could dawn if she quitted the village and how the villagers would manage to eat. So she went, unknown to anybody in the village, to a wood afar off with her cock and her chafing dish and sat down there. The next morrow, all the villagers arose, came as usual to the old woman's house, but not finding her there, thought she must have gone somewhere on some errand, fetched fire from some other quarter and performed each his respective duty. In the meantime the old woman fasted in the wood until dusk, when a villager passed by to some other place on a particular errand. She called to him and said:—"I was not in the village this morning; has it dawned there? Have the people procured fire? Have they all eaten?"

He laughed and said:—"Do you think that the whole world depends entirely on your cock and your dish? Why do you sit fasting here? Get up and go home."

She heard him and was abashed and renouncing the foolish vanity, which had made her think that all the world existed through her, she lived happily.

IV.

The Deaf Friend.

In a certain village there lived a merchant who had a deaf friend. The latter learning that the former was ill, went to enquire after him and while going along the road, determined to hold the following conversation with his sick friend : “ After the usual greeting, I will first ask, ‘ well, Sir, how do you feel yourself to-day ? ’ He will reply, ‘ better,’ and I shall rejoin, ‘ very good.’ I will then make enquiries about his diet and he will reply ‘ rice without salt,’ and I shall rejoin ‘ may it do you much service.’ I shall then put the question, ‘ pray, who is your doctor ? ’ He will, of course, tell me that such and such a person is his doctor and I may safely add, ‘ may God assist him in the fulfilment of his work.’ ”

At length, having come to a resolve, he reached the house and after the usual greetings, seated himself near the patient and said :—“ My friend, how are you ? ”

To which the patient replied :—“ I am very much troubled with a virulent attack of fever.”

The deaf man, not understanding what he said, thought that he was answering according to the plan he had settled beforehand, and responded :—“ Very good : I hope God will keep you so ! ”

The patient, who was already peevish with the disease, was made more so by this speech of his deaf companion. The latter next asked what his diet was and was told that it was the dust of the earth !

“ May it do you much good,” said he ! “ and pray, my good friend, which doctor attends you ? ”

The sick merchant, boiling with wrath cried :—
“ Doctor ? Death himself.”

“ Very well, may God speed his medicines ! ” said the deaf companion and returned home.

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V.

The Sagacious Minister.

Sultan Mahmud* used to wage war on foreign countries and to oppress his people at home. His whole dominions lay consequently desolate. Upon this, his minister thought that it was imperative to contrive some stratagem by which the king would turn out a good ruler. Accordingly, whenever he spoke to the king he used to relate how he had once been a pupil of certain *Sannyasin* and had learnt the language of birds.

* [There have been so many Mahmud Shahs in the Dakhan that it is difficult to say which of them is meant in this story. The probability is, it refers to the very notable doings of the Tughlaks, of whom Sultan Mahmud Tughlak was the last (1394-1413 A. D.)—Ed., *Ind. Ant.*]

One day, as the king and the minister were returning from the hunt, two owls were sitting screaming upon a tree by the road-side. The king, hearing the noise, called upon his minister to tell him what the birds were conversing about. The Premier listened for a short time, as though he really understood the conversation, and then told the king that they were not words fit for him to hear. The king, however, insisted upon hearing the words.

The Vizier, therefore, represented the conversation to be as follows :—“One of the owls has a son and the other a daughter, and the two parent-birds are negotiating a marriage between their children. The former parent said to the latter :—‘ Then, you will give your daughter to my son, but will you give him fifty ruined villages ?’ To which the latter parent replied :—‘ While our Sultan Mahmud by the grace of the Almighty rules so happily, can there be a dearth of ruined villages ? You only asked me for a paltry fifty, I will give you five hundred.’”

When the Sultan heard this, he was very much grieved at heart. So he at once ordered the rebuilding of all the ruined villages in the realm, and made his subjects happy and prosperous.

The Lion and the Jackal.

In the Dandaka forest was a lion which was in the habit of attacking and consuming all the beasts thereof. To rid themselves of the constant fear in which they were kept on his approach, all the other animals proposed to supply the lion with an animal a day, if it would not attack them any longer. This promise was agreed to and kept up for some time. Some time after, it fell to the lot of a fox to be sent to the lion, who by no means relishing the idea of being devoured, walked slowly along, thinking all the while of some plan by which to put an end to the lion and save his own life. The lion, not finding the animal at the proper moment, was very much enraged and insisted upon an explanation for the delay. The fox rejoined :—"Sir, another fox was sent under my charge by all the animals of the forest as an offering for you, but on the road I met another lion, who took away your meal and told me to tell you of it."

The lion ordered the fox to take him instantly to the place of his enemy. The cunning fox took the lion to the side of a well and saying that the other lion was in it, begged the lion to take him

in his arms, that he might also have a peep into the well. When the lion saw the reflection of himself in the waters with the fox in his arms, he instantly came to the conclusion that he was looking on his enemy ; and having let the fox drop made a furious leap into the well and immediately perished.

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VII.

Dream Consciousness.

There was a harlot in the city of Kalyanapura who was in the habit of fleecing a hundred pagodas from whomsoever might appear to her in her dreams. It came to pass that on a certain night a Brahman appeared to her in a dream. She described him to her servants and told them to fetch him and extort the money from him. They seized the Brahman as he was going along the road and told him of the affair and demanded the money. The Brahman was very much troubled and pleaded poverty, but they would not let him go under any circumstances. He accordingly represented his grievances to the king who sent for the woman and demanded an explanation of her procedure.

She replied that she demanded the money as the Brahman appeared to her in her dream. The king said that he would pay her the amount if she would wait a little: He accordingly caused a post to be fixed in the street and the sum tied to the hem of a garment and suspended from the top of the pole. He then placed a mirror underneath and sent for the woman and told her what he had done and called upon her to put her hand into the mirror and receive the money. She informed him of the impossibility of taking the money by putting her hand into the mirror and requested the king to order somebody to climb up the post and bring the money down. But the king replied—"As the Brahman appeared to you only in a dream, you may take the money that appears in a mirror; I cannot order anybody to hand you over the bundle."

On hearing this, the harlot felt quite abashed, bent down her head and went away. It is, therefore, necessary that those who settle disputes should be conversant with tricks.

VIII.

The Inevitability of the Law of Karma.

There was a weaver in the Karnataki, Haimantaka by name, who wove both coarse cloth and fine linen. But as his profits in the calling were very meagre, he was not able to make both ends meet. Adjacent to his abode was another of the same profession, Dhimanta who lived happily on the large income he derived by weaving coarse rough fabric. One day Haimantaka approached his wife and represented his grievances to her, told her how, despite his intelligence in his art, he was not able to eke out a livelihood and how much better placed his brother-weaver was, though weaving only a coarse stuff.

“ My talents are unknown to any one in the place,” said he and determined to quit his home for another place with the object of amassing as much wealth as possible.

His wife rejoined :—“ Of what avail is your going to a distant quarter ? You will get only as much as it has fallen to your lot to earn.”

Despite her remonstrances, he quit his abode, went and settled for a time in a far-off country, wove such clothes as were in consonance with the requirements of the place, made considerable

money by the transaction and wended his way home. • On the way, he stayed at an inn and securing his treasure in a corner went to rest for the night. While he was 'enjoying 'the honey, heavy dew' of slumber, thieves rushed into the inn and purloined every item of property so that when he rose up the next morning, he found to his utter disappointment and distress, that he had nothing left. He thus learnt, "very dearly indeed, the truth of his wife's statements, from the school of experience. 'And, feeling very" despondent, lived upon such small gains as he could make at home." The moral of this is: unlucky anywhere unlucky everywhere !

• IX.

The Washerman Minister.

The king of Kalinga had a washerman who used to wash his clothes exceedingly well and bring and give them to him daily. One day, the king was exceedingly pleased with the scrupulously clean manner in which the clothes were brought to him and promised the washerman to grant any one prayer he might make. The washerman looked at the king and said that he was most

anxious to become the king's minister and requested the king to bestow the post on him. The king did so, dispensing with the services of his old minister, who had served him for a very long time.

It came to pass that not long afterwards a certain other king, having heard of the weakness of the washerman minister, raised a huge army and gave battle. His master, having heard of what had come to pass, called upon the new minister to muster his forces, to which he replied that as he had already made the necessary preparations, there was no cause to fear the enemy. The king fully believed in this statement, but was sorely disappointed, for not long afterwards the city was bombarded by the hostile armies. The king sent at once to the minister, told him of what had happened and enquired of him as to the arrangements he had made.

The minister responded :—"There is nothing to fear in what has come to pass. But I find that the task of ruling a kingdom is a big affair, and while I was thinking of how best to rid ourselves of this difficulty, the enemy chanced to enter and blockade the city. Let them, therefore undergo the perils of governing the kingdom. As

for me, I used to wash the clothes of about a hundred families in this city ; but since my elevation to the ministership, I have had to give up my calling. I will now, therefore, resume it and give you one-half the work and reserve the other half for myself ; the calling being no trouble to me. On these considerations, I have made no preparations for war."

The king was very much grieved when he heard this, but thought the result to be the natural punishment of linking himself to a fool.

X.

The Brahman and his two Sons.

At Madura lived a Brahman who had two sons. After hoarding up immense riches, he at last died. The two sons collected the money together and effected a division of it equally. Each put his share into a sealed bag, entrusted it to an old woman saying that they were going to a far-off country on a pilgrimage and told her to return the amount safely on their return, when they would both come and ask for it. This was agreed to.

After traversing a short distance, the younger brother devised measures to dupe the elder. He

rose one night at midnight, went back to their starting point unknown to his brother, visited the old woman and told her that while they were both wandering along, a tiger had put an end to the elder brother and that that was why he was obliged to return alone, and requested her to return the money entrusted to her by both the brothers. The old woman was a little staggered, but considering that he was not likely to cheat his brother entrusted the whole sum to him. He took it and quietly went away to a far-off place.

Then the elder brother not finding the younger one returned overwhelmed with sorrow to his own abode, went to the old woman and said that he did not know what had become of his brother. He, therefore, called upon her to return the whole of the sum entrusted to her. The old woman told him what had happened a few days before ; how his younger brother misrepresented the state of affairs and had walked away with the whole amount.

On hearing this, he began to dispute with the old woman and brought her before a Court of justice. The magistrate heard both the plaintiff and the defendant in the suit in full, saw how the old woman had been duped, called the man

and decided as follows :—"The money was entrusted to the woman on the understanding that it should be returned when *both* of you came back and demanded it. It is not fair, therefore, to ask her to pay back the amount when you come and ask for it singly. If you are in need of money, therefore, fetch out your brother."

The man was unable to answer this argument and went his own way.



XI.

Durbuddhi and Subuddhi.

At Avanti lived two merchants, Durbuddhi and Subuddhi by name. These two men went to a foreign country, amassed much wealth there and returned and buried unknown to anybody the whole of their riches under a huge tamarind tree very near the town and went to their respective houses.

Not long after, Durbuddhi went clandestinely to the spot, purloined the whole treasure and carried it away to his house. A few days after the incident, both of them conjointly went to the tree and found to their sad disappointment that the treasure was gone. Upon this, Durbuddhi

accused the other of having secreted the treasure, dragged him before a Court of justice and carried a complaint against him saying that Subuddhi alone had carried off unknown to him the treasure, which they jointly buried under the tree, and requested that justice be done in the case.

The judge looked at him and called upon him to prove the truth of his accusation against Subuddhi. Durbuddhi said that he would prove it by the tree itself under which the treasure was buried. The judge replied, that he would investigate the affair the next day.

Meanwhile, Durbuddhi took his father along with him, placed him in the hollow of the tree, and instructed him to answer favourably (to himself) the judge's queries on the morrow. The next day the judge, according to promise, came with his attendants near the tree and asked who had taken away the money. To the intense astonishment of the by-standers, (the man inside) the tree accused Subuddhi of having secreted the money. But the judge was not a man to give in so easily. After a little reflection, he caused some straw to be brought, stuffed the hollow with it and set fire to it. The man inside was suffocated and fell out of the tree dead. The judge, perceiving

ing the deceit that Durbuddhi had played, came to the conclusion that it was he who had walked away with the money. He caused, therefore, all the money to be brought and given over to Subuddhi.

Durbuddhi having paid very dearly for the deceit he had played—in the loss of his riches and his father to boot—went home with a very sad heart.

— :o: —

XII.

Concentration.

At Viragapattam lived two friends, one of whom used to perform with care the morning ablutions at dawn and proceeding to the temple remained there for a long time circumambulating the deity. The other was a frequenter of brothels and passed his time in frivolous conversation with prostitutes. The former, though a frequenter of the temple, always had his heart with his friend, who led so evil a life, and was overwhelmed with grief that he did not follow in his friend's footsteps. The latter was, however, ashamed of his depraved character and was extremely sorry that he did not follow the virtuous ways of his friend.

This went on for a time and then they both breathed their last. But the former went to Hell and the latter to Heaven. The sage Narada seeing the fate of these two, approached the Almighty and said :— “ O God ! Hell has fallen to the lot of the man who spent his days in your temple, while you have given Heaven and final beatitude to the fellow, who never for a moment thought of you, and delighted always in the conversation of women of ill-fame. If you, who are all-powerful, perpetrate such barefaced injustice, who in the world will adore you ? ”

The Almighty smiled on hearing these words and said that he gave the latter man redemption, for, though a frequenter of houses of ill-fame, he centred his mind on the deity ; while the other, who frequented the temple diverted his attention to other matters and totally forgot the deity. Hell, therefore, had become his lot. Thus we see that upon the purity of the mind depends the good or evil state we attain after death.

XIII.

The Selection of a Ruler.

Dwijakirtti, king of Cholainandala, had three sons. As he was old and no longer capable of guiding the helm of the State, he resolved to give his kingdom over to any of his sons who might be fit to rule.

In order, therefore, to ascertain their respective capabilities, he sent for his eldest son first and asked him what he most desired. He replied that he was most anxious to have around him the best logicians, grammarians, rhetoricians and other men of science, and to pass his time in the study of the *Ramayana*, *Mahabharata* and other sacred books. The king thereupon gave him a few villages for his upkeep and told him to go and do according to his wishes.

He then sent for his second son and asked him what he desired most. He replied, "I am anxious to acquire much wealth and visit sacred shrines." The king thereupon gave him the money necessary and sent him on his pilgrimage.

He then sent for the third son and asked him what his desire was. He replied, "To acquire a kingdom, levy a great army, protect the people, make the provinces fruitful and thus acquire a good reputation."

The king was much gratified at these words and thinking that he was the fittest person to rule the kingdom, made over charge of the kingdom to him. The son assumed the reins of Government, treated his people with justice and generosity and consequently, his people flourished.

You should, therefore, enquire into the capabilities of the person and his mental tendencies before entrusting him with authority.

XIV.

The Washerman of Benares.

At Benares lived a washerman, who had an ass and a dog. One night some burglars made a chink in the wall and waited till he should go to bed to break in and rob all his property. The dog was then absent from the spot; but the ass seeing the robbers enter the master's house, divined what would happen and how the house would be rid of all its valuables in no time, and thought that, if the dog were here, he would bark loudly, awake the master and prevent the household property from being robbed. But he did not know when the dog would come; and thought that nobody ought to be indifferent to his master's

affairs, especially, in time of sore distress. He ought, therefore, to bray and thus awake the master—so he brayed to the top of his voice. The washerman hearing the ass bray and thinking, that he was unnecessarily awakened by it, lost his temper, took a stick, beat it well, lay down and was enjoying sound sleep once again when the robbers broke in and began plundering the house. At this juncture, the dog returned. The ass seeing the dog, narrated to him what had happened ; how the thieves broke into the house and carried off the greater part of the property ; how he had brayed wishing to prevent the occurrence ; how it was misunderstood by their master ; what a severe drubbing he had received, and so on. He requested the dog at any rate to bark and let the master know the fact. Thereupon, the dog began to bark loudly. The washerman, hearing it and thinking that the house was being broken open by robbers, rose immediately and searching into every corner of the house, found that the thieves had carried everything off and was very much grieved.

Moral :—Let the shoemaker stick to his last.

To Escape Scot-free.

A certain king of the Karnatak had a flower-garden, in which he spent most of his leisure hours. He had a minister, whose son was in the habit of going daily to the garden and purloining the flowers. The king, missing a number of them day after day, told the gardeners in charge to be on the alert to apprehend the rogue, and bring him before him. They accordingly kept watch, caught the minister's son red handed, put him into a conveyance and took him to the king's palace. The minister was at the time standing at the gate. Those who were near him told him what had happened, how his son had stolen the flowers, how he was caught by the gardeners in the very act of stealing, how he was being conveyed before the king, and wanted the minister to save his son from the infamy. The minister then upon loudly answered, "It is of no consequence; if he has a mouth, he will live." The son, hearing this, quickly perceived the exact import of his father's words and immediately ate all the flowers. When they brought him before the king, he asked the boy why he had stolen the flowers. To which the boy said that they brought him there unjustly,

for he only went to see the garden, but did not steal anything. As there were no flowers found with him, the king believed this and having punished the gardeners, sent them away.

Thus, a ready person may always get himself out of a scrape.

XVI.

Truth will come to Light.

In days long gone by, there lived a wealthy merchant at Delhi. One of his servants purloined some of the property in the house and absconded the next day. The merchant thereupon instituted every search for the thief, but to no avail. Not long after, the merchant chanced to go to another city for business purposes. He there saw the servant who had committed the robbery walking in the street, so he seized him and taxed him with having stolen the property and absconding; but the fellow seized the merchant by the waist-cloth and claimorously demanded his property, saying that the merchant was his servant, that he had stolen the goods out of his house, that he had been looking out for him for many a day and had now found him. He wanted him, therefore, to

hand over the property and then go about his business. On this, the real and the false merchants, still disputing, went before the magistrate and represented their grievances. The magistrate reflected a little and ordered them both to put their heads through a window, and calling the executioner, said to him, "whoever is the servant, cut off his head." Now it came to pass that the fellow who had committed the robbery being really the servant, and hearing that they were going to cut off his head, withdrew it, while the merchant, on the contrary, never removed his head from the window. On this, the magistrate discerning that the man, who withdrew his head, was really the servant who had robbed the house of the merchant punished him severely.

XVII.

The Brahman and his two Wives.

In the Dakhan lived a Brahman who had two wives. To the elder of these a son was born. When the son was about ten months old, the old Brahman set out with his family on a pilgrimage to Benares, but he unfortunately died on his way. The two women thereupon went to an adjacent

agraharam (the Brahmins' quarters in a city or village), and remained there, rearing the boy with great affection: so much so that the child knew not which of the two was his real mother. But one day the younger lady quarrelled with the elder and, declaring that she would no longer remain with her, took the child and set out to go home. The elder thereupon seized the child and demanded of the other why she was taking him away. The younger replied that as she had borne the child she was going away with him. So the two still disputing went to the judge and told their story. He reflected a little, called his servants and ordered them to divide the child in twain and to give each a half. The younger lady remained silent, but the elder being the real mother was of opinion that so long as the child did but live it was enough; and not consenting to the judge's proposal, said to him that the child was not her own and requested him to give it to the other lady. The judge hearing these words, decided that the elder lady was the child's mother and had the boy given to her.

XVIII.

Vanity of Human Wishes.

King Jayachchandri had two favourites, one a Mussalman and the other a Brahman, to whom he was constantly giving presents, by means of which they grew rich and lived happily. One day the king asked them by whose favour they enjoyed their happiness. The Mussalman immediately replied that he was indebted to his, solely to the sovereign; but the Brahman declared that he derived his from the grace of the Almighty. The king, wishing to put their assertions to the test, filled a pumpkin with pearls, which he delivered to the Mussalman and at the same time presented the Brahman with two *fanams*. On their way home the former, not knowing the contents of the pumpkin, began to grumble at the king's present and told the latter that he would sell it to him for his two *fanams*, to which the Brahman consented. When he broke it and found the immense wealth that it contained, he returned with great glee and related the adventure to the king, whose vanity was completely cured by this occurrence. Unassisted by the hand of Providence, human endeavours are fruitless.



The Mussalman and the Robber.

There lived at Rajahmundry a Mussalman whose house was robbed one night. After careful search, he traced some of the lost articles to the house of a person, whom he suspected for more reasons than one to be the rogue, and took him therefore before the judge. The judge asked the Mussalman if he had any positive proof that the prisoner was the person who had robbed his house. He answered in the negative; whereupon, the judge told him that he must dismiss the case, as he was strictly forbidden by the law to enquire into cases, where there were no eye-witnesses to the fact. On hearing this, the Mussalman removed one of his slippers and began to beat the rogue. The judge, in a great passion, asked him what the matter was. He told him that it was because he had not communicated to him beforehand his intention of robbing his house, in order that he might have witnesses ready to prove his villainy. The judge was very much troubled at this reply and remained silent.

The Swan and the Crow .

A crow perched on a banyan tree near the sea-shore, saw a swan passing by and asked where it was going, to which the latter replied that it was going to the Manasasaras. The crow thereupon was extremely anxious to accompany the swan, and requested the latter to take it along with it. The swan hearing these words, said, "O crow, where is the Manasasaras and where are you ? How great is the distance, between you and the *saras* ?" The crow was very much enraged at the reply and said, "You speak without knowing what you are about. If you examine the real truth, you will find that I can fly quicker than yourself. I will exemplify this at once - do you set out and come with me ?" No saying, it soared up the skies and went a short distance along with the swan. Afterward it flew ten yards in advance, and again coming back to the swan said jocosely, "Why, you said something about flying quicker than I and yet, you don't accompany me ; the fact of the matter is that you, without looking into your own powers, had trifled with me." By the time that the crow had gone a little further, it became tired

and unable to fly along and was in sore distress. The swan thereupon laughing placed it on its own wings and prevented it from falling into the waters below, brought it to the shore and left it there.

Thus an impotent fool, who begins by despising the strong and the good, will, in the end, come to degradation.

XXI.

Castle-Building.

At Tirupati lived a Brahman in poor circumstances, who received on a certain day a pot of flour as a present from a certain merchant. He took it, and being very tired, seated himself on the verandah of a house and soliloquized thus: "If I sell this pot of flour, I shall get half a rupee for it, with which I can purchase a kid. This in a short time, will produce a flock, I will then sell them and buy cows, buffaloes, etc.; and thus in a few years, I shall be the master of three-thousand head of cattle. I will then purchase a mansion, which I will furnish elegantly, and marry a beautiful damsel who will crown my happiness by giving birth to a son. My wife will

be particularly fond of me, but I shall not allow her too much freedom and shall sometimes send her away with a kick when she comes to caress me." Thus thinking, he thrust out his leg like one really going to kick, struck the pot and broke it into pieces. The flour got mixed with dirt and all his ideas of happiness vanished.

XXII.

The Path to Fame.

King Jayathratha of Panchala had a son who was gifted with much sense from infancy. One day beholding the king, he asked him what the sure road to reputation was. The king, replied:—"When you rule the kingdom without oppressing the people, you must find out who are rich and who are poor, and protect the latter by giving them food and clothing from time to time. But, however much you may bestow on the rich, no fame will accrue to you. To give you an example, if rain falls while the crops are withering for want of water, the cloud will obtain fame; but however much it rains in the ocean, no reputation can result to the cloud." Thus speaking and

considering how clever the boy was, the king made over half his kingdom to him. The youth assumed the sceptre, confirmed the leases that had been given to the people, and finding out the poor caused food and clothing to be given to them and cherished them much. He thus obtained great celebrity.

XXIII.

Injustice as the Result of Ignorance.

At Channapattana lived an Englishman, who, ignorant of any language other than English, kept an interpreter thoroughly conversant with the vernaculars of the country. One day some conjurors came to the gentleman and having fixed their bamboo, danced and displayed several feats of agility before him. The gentleman was highly gratified and sending for his interpreter, told him to give them ten pagodas. The latter took them home, gave them one pagoda and told them to go about their business. As they thought this a poor recompense for their trouble and suspected that the interpreter had deceived them, they turned to the gentleman and showing him the

pagoda, informed him that his interpreter had given them only this much. As the gentleman was ignorant of their language, he sent for the interpreter and asked him what they were saying. He told him that among the ten pagodas he had given them, they said that that pagoda was a bad one and wanted a better one in exchange for it. The gentleman thereupon became very much enraged and ordered them to be well thrashed and sent away.

They, who are ignorant of the vernaculars of the place they inhabit and believe what others tell them, must necessarily be guilty of injustice.

XXIV.

Child is Father of the Man.

A Brahman well versed in every branch of science, was journeying with his disciples on a pilgrimage to Benares and about sun-set one evening, met a young Brahman boy, who was feeding a herd of cattle near a wood, of whom he asked the distance to the adjacent village, where he proposed to halt for the night. The boy responded :—" Just look at me, at the cattle I am feeding, the forest and the sun, and your question

will be answered ; for if the village was not very near, would such a young boy as I am be feeding so many cattle near a forest at this time of the day ?" From this sensible response, the Brahman formed a high opinion of the boy's abilities and following him home, told his father that the lad was too clever to be employed in feeding cows and requested that he might be allowed to take him with his other disciples to Benares, where he would educate him. The father gladly agreed to the proposal and the lad afterwards turned out a very brilliant character.

XXV.

The Boy and the Thief

As a boy was sitting on the brink of a well crying bitterly, a thief came there and seeing him, asked him why he was crying. He answered that as he was playing, he looked into that well, when the pearl necklace that was on his neck slipped off and fell into the water. If he should go home without the necklace, his parents would thrash him and on that account he was crying. The thief, thinking he would be able to steal it, said to him :—" My lad be not afraid, I will go

down into the well and get the pearl necklace ; do you take care of my clothes ?" Having left his clothes on the bank, he descended into the well naked. As soon as he had got to the bottom, the boy took his clothes and ran away with them. The thief, having searched for a long time and not finding the necklace, came up again ; but not seeing the boy anywhere, he exclaimed ;—" Even I, who am a rogue, have been deceived by a boy."

Moral :—However clever a person thinks himself, he may be outwitted by others.



XXVI.

Ingratitude.

There was a tiger in a certain wood who used to kill and devour all the beasts that inhabited it. One day he caught a wild buffalo and while eating it, one of its bones stuck in his jaws. Being unable to extract the bone, blood and puss collected there and caused the tiger a good deal of pain. The tiger laid himself down under a tree and in great pain, opened his mouth and exclaimed thus :—" How shall I extract this ? How shall I live ? What shall I do ?". In this distress he saw a crow upon the tree and said to him :—" O crow,

you see the pain I am suffering from; if you will but extract the bone and restore me to life, I will give you as much as you want from the food I procure every day." The crow was moved by this supplication and taking compassion on him, entered his mouth from which he took out the bone and asked the tiger for the flesh he had promised. The tiger replied:—"When you entered my mouth, I did not crush you under my jaws, but allowed you to come out uninjured. Ungrateful for this, do you ask me for flesh? Look to your business."

Thus people in prosperity often forget the friends, who have served them in adversity.

XXVII.

Keep to your Promise.

There lived at Dharapura a Brahman, who went one day into the forest to gather some fruits and flowers. At this juncture, a tiger came there and the Brahman becoming afraid, tried to make his escape. The tiger, however, pursued and overtook him. In this sad predicament, the Brahman begged him to spare his life for three days, that he might return home, settle his affairs and take

leave of his family. The tiger asked him what was to be done in the event of his not returning. He replied, there was no fear, for he would take his oath to return. The tiger having consented, he returned home disconsolate and after employing the three days in settling his affairs and taking leave of his family, he arrived at the prescribed time, at the place where he had appointed to meet the tiger, who was so pleased at his veracity that he allowed him to depart uninjured.

Thus a person who keeps up to his word is always respected.



XXVIII.

Preordinance.

In Jayasthala on the banks of the Kaveri, there lived a Brahman, Durgatha by name. As he was in very indigent circumstances, he used to go abegging to four different villages, come home at about two or three o'clock every day and cook his own meal and eat. Things went on thus for some time and when on a certain day the poor Brahman was plodding his weary way homeward, it came to pass that Iswara and his wife were sauntering in the heavens. Parvati,

the wife, unable to endure the sight of this poverty-stricken Brahman, took compassion on him and requested her husband to bless him with riches. Whereupon Iswara replied that Brahma had not written on his face that he must enjoy wealth and that he must, therefore, live and die a beggar. Parvati thereupon, said :—" Let me see how this Brahman cannot become wealthy when we will it," and threw a heap of one thousand gold *mohars* on his way. The Brahman came to within ten yards of the heap, when suddenly the thought struck him to see if he could walk like a blind man. He accordingly shut his eyes and passed off the heap of *mohars* on the way.

Moral :—The law of karma (fate) is inevitable.

XXIX.

Duped by the Majority.

There was a Brahman, Vasanthayaji by name, at Sriramapura, on the banks of the Tamraparni. He conceived the idea of performing a *yajna* (sacrifice), and wanted four or five of the best goats for the purpose. He went, therefore, to a neighbouring village, purchased the goats, tied a rope round their necks and was wending his way

home, when four Sudras wanted to appropriate the goats to themselves. One of them, therefore, came and stood before the Brahman and said : " Why are you carrying a number of mad dogs ? " The Brahman merely thought him a fool who confounded goats with mad dogs. He went on a little further, when another of the Sudras put him the same question and wanted him to take care lest the mad dogs should bite him. The Brahman, on hearing these words, entertained a slight doubt in his mind. While pursuing his track a little further, a third of the Sudras came close by the goats, grew exceedingly angry and began to rebuke the Brahman for letting loose a number of mad dogs on the way-farers. The Brahman, on hearing this, became certain that they must be mad dogs and tried to unloose them, when the last of the Sudras came up and wanted him to tie them up to a tree adjacent, as by letting them loose, they would fall upon people and bite them. The Brahman thereupon tied them to a tree and ran away. The Sudras then untied them and took them home.

Moral :—An intelligent person can be duped by a number of men maintaining the same foolish opinion.

XXX.

•Cheats will be surely Cheated:

In the village of Yachavara, there lived a Sudra named Isukathakkidigadu (*lit.* •the holder of a quantity of sand). One day he wanted to go to another village and started with a *ser* of sand tied to the hem of his garment. At Machavara, an adjacent village, lived another Sudra, Pedathakkidigadu (*lit.* the holder of a quantity of cowdung), who also wanted to go to another village and started with a *viss* of cowdung tied to the hem of his garment. They met each other accidentally in the evening, went to the same village and seated themselves on the rial of a rest-house. Isukathakkidi, saw the bundle of Pedathakkidi, took it to be a quantity of food and resolved to reserve it for his own use and so asked him what it was. Whereupon Pedathakkidi, who entertained the same desires about the bundle of Isukathakkidi, told him that it contained a quantity of food and asked Isukathakkidi what the contents of his bundle were. To which he replied :—" I have rice with me, but I regret I have not like you brought other food with me. I feel exceedingly hungry, but what can I do?" Pedathakkidigadu, hearing

the pitiful words of his friend, said :—“ Do not feel sorry. Let us exchange our bundles. I do not feel hungry just now.” They mutually consented to the proposal, exchanged their bundles and each fearing the other went to a place afar off in different directions, untied their bundles and were extremely amazed.

Moral :—Never entertain not thoughts of deceiving others lest they deceive you.

XXXI.

The Tiger and its Council.

At Gannavara lived a very poor Brahman, Divasarma, who eked out a livelihood as a beggar. One day, when he chanced to go to the adjacent wood for fuel for his sacrifice, he saw a huge tiger under a spreading banyan tree. Shaking with fear, he bethought him how best he could go home. There were a few lambs near the tiger at the time, who saw the shivering Brahman and that he had come in innocence of his danger; so they wished to devise means for saving him. The lambs, therefore, approached the tiger and said :—“ O King Tiger your charity knows no bounds. Your fame extends over the four corners of the

world. A Brahman has been here for a very long time, eagerly longing to see you." The tiger thereupon was overjoyed and told the lambs to fetch the Brahman to his presence. Then the lambs went to the Brahman, told him not to be afraid and took him along with them to the tiger. Whereupon the tiger was exceedingly pleased with the Brahman and presented him with some of the ornaments of those, whom he had slain on previous occasions. The Brahman thereupon was filled with joy, took the jewels home, sold some of them and lived comfortably out of the proceeds of the sale.

Some time after, a neighbouring Brahman, feeling jealous of the former's situation, thought he could also make a fortune by going to the forest and on going there, saw the tiger surrounded by a number of foxes and dogs. These animals thinking they might share the spoil reported the coming of the Brahman to the tiger and had him slain.

Moral :—People will assuredly come to grief if they approach a king, when he is surrounded by evil councillors.



A Wise Counsel.

In Bengal, there was a king who built a huge fort and lived in it with a very large retinue, and was invincible so long as he remained in the fort.

Now a tributary king (*Polygar*) conceived the idea of somehow drawing the king out of his fortress, confining him in prison and occupying his vast dominions. With this object, he went to the king one day and informed him that on the morrow, his son's marriage was to be celebrated and requested the king to be present on the auspicious occasion. The king consented, but his minister heard the news, approached him and said :—" You have entertained, I hear, thoughts of going to the Polygar's house. He is a man full of tricks and has large forces. I am sure he will do you some mischief, once you are away from the fort. Do not go to the Polygar."

To which the king replied :—What care we how full of tricks he is? He has been so long faithful to us and, judging him from his antecedents, he will not, we think, do us any harm. Had he entertained such thoughts, why did he not invade our dominions, while we remained in the fortress?"

The minister replied:—"As you are invincible so long as you remain in the fort, he dare not do you any harm. He, therefore, seeks your friendship. But should you once go out of the fort, you are helpless. He will not suffer the auspicious moment to pass away. He will show you then his spite. To give you an example, the lotus so long as it remains in water, spreads forth its petals despite the heat of the sun, the sun all the while aiding it. But once it comes out of its proper element (water), the same sun makes it wither away. It is the same with the Polygar and yourself."

The king was exceedingly pleased with these words and refrained from going to the Polygar.

XXXIII.

The Talisman.

At Chatrapur lived four poor friends, who being in great distress and sorely puzzled how to eke out a livelihood, met at a certain spot to devise means for bettering their condition. They thereupon performed severe austerities to the Kali of the place who, being pleased with them, appeared to them and asked them what they

wanted. They asked her to confer riches and happiness on them. The Goddess thereupon gave each of them a talisman, which was to be carried on the head. They were told to go in a northerly direction and wherever the talisman fell from the head, to dig there and take whatever came to each person's lot. The four friends set out on their errand and went a certain distance, when the talisman of the first person fell from his head. When the spot was dug into, an enormous quantity of copper was found. The first man saw the others and said that he was quite content with his lot and stopping there, he carried the copper home. After travelling a little more distance, the talisman of the second man fell from his head. The spot was dug into and an enormous quantity of silver was found. He followed the action of the first friend and desisted from going any further. The other two travelled for some time longer, when the talisman on the head of one of them fell off. When the spot was dug into, an enormous quantity of gold was found. He, thereupon, told the last friend not to proceed any further, as with the quantity of gold found both of them could live happily. But he gave a deaf ear to the advice and went on for some time

longer, till the talisman fell from his head. The spot was dug into and a quantity of iron was found. He was overcome with grief at his lot and regretting the neglect of his friend's advice, he retraced his steps. But alas, in this he was sorely disappointed, for he was not able to find this friend. Thereupon immersed in grief, he tried to get at the iron that had fallen to his lot, but he was not able to find the iron. Very sorry for his lot, he came back to the town and lived once more by begging.

Moral :—A person who hears not the advice tendered by his most intimate friends will surely come to grief.

XXXIV

The Crane and the Fish.

Lake Vimalavati has been occupied from time immemorial by large numbers of fish. Once upon a time, a crane which happened to pass by, conceived the idea of preying on them and stood on the brink of the lake. But it saw the fish going away from it shaking with fear and so, it said :—“ I very much regret your going away from me in the belief that birds of my order make you

their prey and that I would do the same. But I have not come here with such an object in view. I following others of my kind, have killed a good many fish and became a sinner, but I am now grown very old and have renounced the world. I am come here to perform penance. Fear not any harm from me. You may roam anywhere you please."

The poor fish believed the wily words of the crane, especially as the crane did not interfere with them at all, though they approached it. After some time had thus elapsed, the crane appeared to be very much dejected and melancholy. The fish approached it and asked it what the matter was. To which the crane replied :—" What shall I say ? A twelve years' famine will very shortly visit the land. Not a drop of water will then remain in this lake. I am able to know this by second sight and as you are my close friends, I cannot resist the temptation of informing you lest you die when the famine comes."

The fish were exceedingly joyed at the humane nature of the crane and requested it to save them from the impending peril. The crane thereupon, informed them, that there was a lake a few yards further off, which would never dry,

and that it would be a very happy refuge for the fish. The latter requested the former to take them up and leave them there. The crane, thereupon, took them up one by one and left them in the sun on a mountain-top and slowly devoured them.

Moral :—We should never, therefore, believe the words of our natural enemies.

• XXXV.

The Hare and the Elephants.

A famine, in days long gone by, once devastated the whole of the Southern country and there was not a drop of water visible in pond, lake, well or tank. The elephants very much troubled by thirst went in search of a place, where they could satisfy it to their heart's content, and found a tank called Chandra-pushkarani. As the tank was full to the brim, they rested there and quenched their thirst and also found a habitation in the woods adjacent, till the whole country was again green with verdure. But the track of these elephants was full of hares and these were smashed to pieces under their heavy footsteps. The hares seeing the calamity that

had befallen them, and how they were greatly reduced in numbers, met at a certain spot to devise means for sending the elephants away to a distant spot. One of them said :—“ Why fear ‘the elephants ? I have devised means to get rid of them.”

On a certain moon-light night, it climbed and sat on an adjacent mountain-top and said to the elephants who came by, as usual, to drink from the tank :—“ O, ye elephants, I have been deputed by Chandra (‘the moon’), whose tank it is, to inform you that this tank has been dug under his orders. That is the reason why it goes under the name of *Chandrapishkarani* (*lit.*, the moon’s tank). He comes here every night and dallies with his wives. For some time past, he has been interrupted in his pastime by your advent and meddling with the waters. He is, therefore, very angry with you. Quit the tank instantly otherwise, he told me he would smash you up ere dawn. If you want to see whether he is angry or not, just look into this tank and you will be satisfied.”

The elephants were wonder-struck and seeing the reflection of the moon, agitated by the wind in the waters, mistook it for his wrath with them,

bowed to the moon, requested him to excuse them, as they had come there in innocence and desired the hare to intercede with the moon on their behalf. The elephants, thereupon, quitted the place instantly and the hares from that time forward lived comfortably.

XXXVI.

An Honest Servant.

There was a king at Anantapur Kunthibhoja by name. While he was holding his *durbar*, being seated on his throne and surrounded by a host of pundits, ministers and others, a Kshatriya came and bowed and said that he was an expert in archery and that he came there to serve the king, as he was not able to get a living elsewhere. The king engaged his services for one hundred rupees per month. From that day forwards, he kept a vigilant watch over the king's palace. On a certain midnight, while the king was sleeping comfortably upstairs, he heard the cries of a woman, called his attendant and asked him what it was. The archer said that he, too, had heard the same cries for ten days past; but, could not say why it was, but that he would make enquiries

should the king command him to do so. The king consented and followed him *incognito* to see whither he went. He went outside the town and there saw a woman with dishevelled hair, seated near the temple of Durga, crying at the top of her voice. He asked her who she was and why she was crying. She replied that she was the tutelary Goddess of Kunthiboga's kingdom and that as the king was to breathe his last in two or three days more, she was crying—for who would protect her then? The archer then asked her if there were any means by which the king's life could be saved. Whereupon she said that, if the archer's son were offered as a sacrifice to Durga, the king would live for a very long time. The archer thereupon consented to the proposal, went home and informed his son of what had transpired. The son asked him to perform the sacrifice instantly and save the life of the king, for, by the king a good many people lived. The archer then took his son to the temple, drew his sword from the scabbard and was about to slay him, when Durga appeared before them and said that she was so pleased with his bravery that he must desist, and said moreover that she would confer on him any boon he

might ask. The archer then requested Durga to spare the life of king Keunthibhoja and to bless him with long life and prosperity. Durga gave him the boon sought for and disappeared. The archer overcome with joy, sent his son home and went to the king's palace. The king, who witnessed *incognito* everything that had transpired, quietly reached his palace, went upstairs and pretended to be asleep. The archer went to the king and said that a woman who had had a quarrel with her husband was weeping bitterly, and that he had pacified her and sent her home. The king feeling grateful to the archer, raised him to the rank of Commander-in-Chief of his forces.

Moral :—Honest servants will not fail to risk their own lives, when calamities befall their masters.

XXXVII.

The three Fish.

Three fish lived in the bed of a river. One of these perceived that the water would dry up in the ensuing summer, informed its other companions of the same and said further, how they

would run the risk of being carried off by the fishermen at the time and that they should, therefore, seek a habitation elsewhere. It wanted, therefore, that all of them should go into the current and settle in the sea or in the bed of another river. The other two laughed at the words of their companion. The clever fish, therefore, went and settled in another quarter unaccompanied. Not long after, summer set in and the waters of the river dried up. A fisherman threw his net into the bed, caught the two fish and put them on the bank. One of them was possessed of some sense and appeared to be dead, remaining motionless, while the other began to jump. The latter, therefore, was dashed to the ground and smashed to pieces. The former, perceiving the fisherman going away with his net, crawled unperceived and, jumped into the waters and lived comfortably.

Moral :—Whoever perceives coming events and tries to avert danger shall surely be happy; and the person who tries to extricate himself from difficulties, even after they happen, may also consider himself lucky; but the man who remains idle will surely come to grief.

XXVIII.

The Crane and the Swan.

In days long gone by, there lived on the banks of the Krishna, a crane on a silk-cotton tree. Once upon a time, it beckoned a swan passing by and said :—" Your body resembles mine in colour, but your beak and legs are red. I have not come across a bird of your kind till now. Who are you ? What is your errand ? "

Whereupon the swan gave the following answer :—" I am a swan, I am an inhabitant of Brahma's Manasasaras. I am coming thence."

The crane then asked what things were procurable there and what formed the chief article of its food. To which the swan replied :—" As these things are made by angelic hands, it is beyond my comprehension to describe the grandeur of the place ; but you may hear some of the important things procurable. In and around that region are found golden earth, ambrosia, gold lotuses, heaps of pearls, clouds of perfumes and the tree of paradise. Every object thereof is a wonder."

When the swan informed the crane that it partook of the buds of such lotuses, the latter impatiently asked the former if any oysters were procurable there. On receiving a reply in the

negative, the latter burst into a fit of laughter and said :—“ Why prattle of the excellences of a place void of oysters ? It is a pity you do not know the excellences of oysters.” Thus the crane put the swan to shame.

Moral :—People will talk big about the meanest things if they like them, and disparagingly, of the best things, if they do not like them.

XXXIX.

King Sibi.

By far the best of monarchs that wielded sway over the Nishada country was king Sibi, who was the type of virtue, a well-wisher of his subjects. He would even forego his life to protect the refugee. One day, the Gandarvas began praising his talents and virtuous qualities at the Court of their king Dêvendra, who heard them and coming to a resolve to put them to test, assumed the form of a hawk and called upon his friend Agni to take the form of a dove. The hawk then pursuing the dove, reached the earth. The dove came to king Sibi and said :—“ O King ! there comes a hawk to put an end to me and make me its prey. Shield me.” So saying,

he took refuge. Not long after, the hawk approached the king and said :—"It is unfair of you to protect my prey, for that will lead to my certain death. Refrain, therefore, from protecting the dove." To which the king replied that he would give the dove's weight of flesh from his body instead of the dove itself. The hawk consented to the proposal. The king, thereupon brought scales, put the dove on one pan and his flesh on the other and seeing that even a great quantity of his flesh did not equally balance the dove's, the king himself sat in one of the pans, when the scales were rendered equal. Whereupon, the hawk and the dove thought very highly of the king, assumed their own forms, stood before the king, praised him, conferred certain boons on him and went to their respective worlds.

Moral :—Good men will even forego their lives in order to protect those who trust in them.

The King and the Giant.

Narada, the greatest of Rishis, was once upon a time, while on a visit to Nandikēsvara, requested by him to narrate any important news he had of the *lokas* (worlds); whereupon he told him the stories attributed to the two and thirty images on the throne of Vikrāmarka.

In Vēdanarayana-pūru Agra-hara, there lived a Brahman, Vishnusarma by name, who had four sons, Yajnanarayana, Vēdanarayana, Viranarayana and Chandrasarma. The first three were thoroughly conversant with Vedic literature and all the *sastras* and displayed their learning at the Courts of various kings, receiving very valuable presents; while the fourth, as he was not instructed in any of the sciences, acted as their servant. Matters went on thus for some time, till the fourth son became disgusted with his lot and resolving to visit foreign lands for the purpose of becoming educated, left his home at dead of night without telling any one. The next evening he reached the bank of a river near an *agrahara*, performed his daily ablutions in it and came out to perform the *japa* alone.

A Brahmarakshasa, dwelling in, an adjacent *pipal*-tree, assumed the form of a Brahman, descended from the tree and stood before Chandrasarma and enquired who he was ; whereupon Chandrasarma thinking him to be a Brahman of the adjacent *agrahara*, told him his errand and his story. The Brahmarakshasa then said :— “ Well then, you are intent upon learning.” Chandrasarma right glad of the turn events had taken, consented to receive instruction from the supposed Brahman, who, thereupon, appeared to him in his true colours and asked him not to be afraid of him. But for all that, Sarma shook with fear and shut his eyes and so the Brahmarakshasa immediately resumed the form of a Brahman, consoled Chandrasarma, took him up to the top of the *pipal*-tree, taught him without a moment's stop,—without sleep or food for six months,—and then informed him that he was rid of his curse. He himself would now go on a visit to Benares, but Sarma was at perfect liberty to go home being completely trained in all the sciences, and ere long would rise to a very prominent position, and he further blessed him with four very intelligent sons. Chandrasarma, thereupon, enquired of his pre-

ceptor the circumstances under which he became a Brahmarakshasa, and why he had to go on a visit to Benares. To which the latter replied :— “ I was living some time ago at Sarasvatipura on the banks of the Krishna, and learnt the various sciences. While there, a Brahman pupil visited the place and requested me to instruct him in some of the sciences, which I refused to do, feeling very proud of my learning and so my would-be pupil became very much infuriated and said :—‘ Reserve your learning to yourself ; you need not teach me at all : I shall learn from some other person,’ and cursed me to become a Brahmarakshasa. Quaking with fear, I requested him to inform me how best I could be relieved of the curse. And he replied :—‘ After some time, Chandrasarma, a Brahman intent upon learning, will visit foreign lands. You will accidentally meet him on the bank of a river. He will learn the various sciences from you and, if you will then visit Benares and bathe in the sacred waters of the Ganges, you will be relieved of your curse and become a Brahman once more.’ I, therefore, became a Brahmarakshasa and took up my abode in yonder *pipal*-tree, eagerly awaiting your arrival.

As I have instructed you in all the sciences, I shall now go on a visit to Benares to rid myself of the curse." Chandrasarma then took a different route, as he had forgotten the way by which he came to the *pipul*-tree and while going through the palace street of Ujayani, saw the house of a public woman and mistook it for a Brahman's quarters and as he was very tired, having had neither sleep nor food for six months past, went in, spread his upper garment on the verandah and quietly went to sleep. Not long after, the house-owner's daughter came out, perceived the sleeping person and thinking that he would be a fit husband for herself, went in and informed her mother of the fact with great glee.

The mother intent upon appropriating the new-comer's money came out to see if he were a wealthy man and perceiving him to be a poor Brahman, became enraged at her daughter. But the daughter gave a deaf ear to her mother's words and insisted on possessing the Brahman. The mother consented, as she was unable to win her daughter over to her arguments. The Brahman did not rise the next morning nor did he move a muscle. This made the mother inform the king of what had transpired, who imme-

diately sent the palace doctors to the spot. They felt the pulse of the sleeping person and went and informed the king that as, for some reason or other, he had had neither food nor sleep for six months past, his body should be smeared all over with boiled rice for some time, and if this were repeated for a time, he would enjoy the 'honey-heavy dew' of slumber and would rise. After six months' tending according to the doctor's advice, Chandrasarma rose one fine morning just as an ordinary person would, who had enjoyed a very refreshing sleep. Then he began to think:—"Whose house is this? Who is this girl? What brought me here? But what care I for all this?" He was preparing to go his own way, when the girl taking hold of the hem of his garment asked him:—"Are you going to quit me? I have been eagerly waiting for you and tending you for these six months. You are my husband: I am your wife." On hearing this, the Brahman replied:—"I am a Brahman and you a Sudra; this sort of talk is, therefore, unfair of you. What have I to do with you?" So saying, he rose; but the girl accompanied him closely wheresoever he went. The matter was reported by the townsfolk to the king who

summoned the Brahman and the Sudra girl before him and as he was not able to effect a compromise between them, he invited a certain number of the best *pundits* and requested them to judge of the affair, who pacified Chandrasarma by saying that a Brahman is at liberty to marry from among all the four castes.

The king then married Chandrasarma first to his *purohit's* daughter, then to his own daughter, thirdly, to the daughter of the wealthiest merchant of the locality and lastly, to the girl in question. As the king had no male issue, he transferred one-half of his kingdom with the necessary army to Chandrasarma, retained him at his own place and lived happily. Chandrasarma had four lodgings prepared for his four wives, kept each of them in a separate house, performed his daily ablutions in the house of his Brahman wife and lived happily, not swerving from the injunctions laid down in the *sastras*. Some time after, the king died and as he had left no sons, Chandrasarma was installed king of the whole realm by the ministers, *purohits* and the people. He had by his Brahman wife a son named Varuruchi; by the second, Vikramarka; by the third, Bhatti; and by the fourth,

Hari. All the four sons were well educated. Chandrasarma being very much pleased with the noble qualities of Vikramarka and as he was moreover the collateral grandson of the late monarch, installed him king and made Bhatti his Premier. Vikramarka then prayed to the Goddess Kali who, being greatly pleased with his severe austerities, appeared before him and granted him a boon, that he would rule for one thousand years, that neither gods, spirits, demons nor giants should be able to vanquish him, and that he would meet his death by the hand of a child, born to a girl thirteen *months* old. Vikramarka then came home and informed Bhatti of what had transpired, when the latter said that he would extend the period of the life of Vikramarka by an additional one thousand years. On his questioning the former how he was able to grant the boon, Bhatti replied :—"The Goddess Kali has blessed you that you should *rule* for one thousand years. Rule over the kingdom for six months and travel over the world for the other six months, so that by the time you have ruled for one thousand years you will practically live for two thousand years." Vikramarka was greatly pleased with the tactics of Bhatti and did

as directed. He became afterwards one of the world's best rulers.

One day a *sannyasin* came to Vikramarka, blessed him and gave him a fruit. The same thing was repeated day after day and the king used to give it over to his steward. On a certain day, the fruit was given by the king to a monkey standing near and when the latter bit a portion of it, a large number of diamonds fell out of the fruit. The king was wonder-struck and called upon the steward to produce the fruits entrusted to him. On their being produced and broken open, the king found, to his utter amazement, an additional number of diamonds. The king, feeling very pleased with the *sannyasin*, enquired of his errand, when the latter informed him that he was intent upon performing a great *tapas*; that he needed, therefore, the king's help and that he would tell him the business, should he (the king) go to his abode on the fifteenth day from that date at dead of night. He would then help him, for his *tapas* would be fulfilled. The king consented and dressed himself like a warrior and, with sword in hand, went to the spot, appeared respectfully before the *sannyasin* and asked him what he wanted him to do. The

sanniyasin said :—“ O, King ! you do not fail to abide by your promise. I am very glad you have come here. Whenever I intend to perform a *tapas*, one Bethala throws as many obstacles as he can in the way and never allows it to reach completion. As you are the strongest and bravest of men, if you will bring Bethala here, tied hand and foot, there will be no one to throw obstacles in the way of my *tapas*. If you talk to Bethala while bringing him here, he will assuredly run away. You should, therefore, not talk to him at all.” Vikramarka then enquired the whereabouts of Bethala, went and tied him up and carried him on his back. Bethala said to him that he would put him a question which, if he knowingly failed to answer, would break his head into a thousand pieces :—

“ O King ! In days long gone by, there lived a king named Yasakethu, who held sway over Sobhavatipura according to the *dharma*s laid down in the *sastras*. Close to the town was a temple of the Goddess Kali, to whom the townsfolk were in the habit of performing *yajras* year after year. Once, while the women of the town were bathing in the temple tank, Dhavala, a washerman of another town, while going to Sobhavatipura on

business, passed through the temple and saw the woman bathing. He fell in love with one of them and hid himself in a certain quarter and not being able to bear the finely-pointed darts of Cupid, followed her to a little distance from her home, promising meanwhile to offer the Goddess Kali his head, a few days after the accomplishment of his cherished object. He was terribly lovesick and did not go to Sôbhavatipura at all; but went home and became more and more emaciated day by day. His parents, who learnt the whole affair, enquired of their son of the whereabouts of the girl, went and negotiated with the girl's parents and effected a marriage between the two. A few days after this, the girl's parents sent her to her mother-in-law. Some time afterwards, they sent their son to inform the boy's parents and bring his brother-in-law and sister to their house. Dhavala's parents were very glad and sent their son and daughter-in-law with the new-comer. They set out and while resting themselves a little on the way near the temple of the Goddess Kali, Dhavala went in and offered his head as a sacrifice to the Goddess, as he had promised, and died. The new-comer, who was eagerly awaiting the arrival of

his brother-in-law, not seeing him come out, went into the temple and, to his utter disappointment and sorrow, saw his brother-in-law lying there dead, and died himself. The girl, amazed at both her husband and her brother not coming out for so long a time, went into the temple and was wholly immersed in sorrow and was about to slay herself, when the Goddess Kâli appeared, before her and said that she was pleased with her chastity and that it was unfair of her to venture on suicide and said further that, if the two heads of the slain be brought and attached to the other parts of the bodies, they would once more come to life. In her haste, she brought the head of her husband and attached it to the body of her brother and *vice versa*, and they both rose up. She was now on the horns of a dilemma and did not know what to do." Bêthala then asked Vikramarka who should be taken to husband by the girl. Vikramarka replied that, as the head is the most essential part of the whole body, to whatsoever body the head of her husband was attached, that man should become her husband. Bêthala upon this immediately disappeared.

Bethala, however, was once more fetched and he again began to tell a story. "There remained

with Sakatasringa, King of Mallikapura, without a moment's severance, his attendant, Karpataka by name. One day, the king set out on a hunting excursion with his large army to a wood, mounted a horse, went with Karpataka to an uninhabited place a great distance off and being very much fatigued, rested under the leafy spreading branches of a huge *bark* tree, when Karpataka brought and gave him two fruits of the emblematic myrobalan (*amalaka*). The king then went home and some time after, informed Karpataka that he had conceived a passion for the daughter of the King of Simhaladvipa (Ceylon), and wanted him to arrange for a marriage between them. Karpataka set sail in a merchant vessel, which unfortunately was wrecked and all the people perished. Karpataka alone, while swimming with the greatest difficulty, caught hold of a twig which carried him to Nagaloka, where he saw a temple of Durga, at which he rested. He there saw a number of Naga girls visiting the temple, worshipping the Goddess and dancing and singing. He conceived a passion for one among the number and communicated it to the lady through her maid-servants. The lady seemed to agree to the proposal and wanted

Karpataka to bathe in a tank near by. No sooner was that done than he found himself, to his utter amazement, floating in the tank of Mallikapura. He then informed the king of what had transpired. The king, thereupon, wanted Karpataka to show him the woman. The whole route was retraversed and the woman in the temple of Durga was shewn. The girl with whom Karpataka had fallen in love, fell in love with the king and told him that she would supply him with everything, if he should fulfil her cherished object. The king, thereupon, told her that Karpataka was his son, a fair-looking intelligent young man, a person who would act up to his promise, cost whatever it might, and that she should marry and live comfortably with him to which she consented. The king took hold of Karpataka's hand and, saying that the union effected between the latter and the Naga girl was equal to one of the *amalakas* given him and that he should do some service for the other fruit, went and immersed himself in the waters of the tank and reached his capital safe. Karpataka then lived happily with the girl." Béthala then asked Vikramarka ;—" Which of them did the greatest good ?" To which Vikramarka replied that it is

but natural for a servant to do good to his master, but the master repaid him the good thinking very highly of the servant's services—that must be considered the greatest. Bethala on hearing this, once more disappeared.

Bethala was again brought, and again began to narrate a story. "In days long gone by, there lived at Vijayanagara a king named Danduvakesa, who married Satyavrata, and was so wholly immersed in the luxuries of her charms that he was practically dead to the outer world. Tirthadarsi, his minister, was then guiding the helm of the State. It was rumoured abroad, however, that the minister had appropriated the State to himself and he not being able to endure the calumny, went away to a foreign place. The king then entrusted his Government to another minister of his and pursued his old habits. After wandering through various countries, Tirthadarsi reached a port, contracted friendship with a merchant there and remained always with him. One day the merchant informed him that he was about to set sail to an island afar off and asked him to look after his affairs till he returned. The minister, thereupon, said that he would accompany the merchant, as he could not endure

the pangs of separation. They both went on board the vessel and saw a very beautiful woman on an island. On being questioned by the minister who she was; the merchant replied that he did not know, but that he saw her every time he crossed that way. As soon as their business was finished, both of them reached home safely. Some time afterwards, the minister took leave of the merchant, went to his own place, was received very cordially by the king, who enquired of him why he had left him. To which the minister replied :—‘ You were wholly immersed in female charms and, as I guided the State, numerous scandals were spread abroad that I had misused my authority, and so, I went away to a foreign place. I then made friendship with a merchant and went on board his vessel to a far off island and there saw near the temple of the Goddess Kali a large *bark* tree, underneath whose umbrageous branches was a woman, the very type of perfect womanhood.’ On hearing this, the king was very much astonished and wanted to see the girl and, having received instructions from the minister, reached the island, saw the girl and thought that the minister was an unusually self-controlled man; for every man who

had seen her had conceived a passion for her. Thus he praised the minister and went and prostrated himself before the Goddess Kali and then approached the girl, who turned her back on him. The king then took hold of the hem of her garment and asked her not to treat him with contempt. The girl understanding that he was the greatest of kings did according to his wishes. Some time after, the girl went to bathe in the waters of a tank for the observance of a *vrata*, when she was unfortunately devoured by a *rakshasa*. The king, on seeing this, immediately drew his sword and slew the *rakshasa* and drew the girl out of his body. The girl then informed the king why she was devoured by the *rakshasa* and lived happily with the king as usual. The king then took her to his capital and remained there more than ever addicted to female allurements. The minister then poisoned himself and died." Vikramarka was then questioned by Bēthala :—"Why did the minister die? For the king's return? For the king's marrying the girl whom he (the minister) had fallen in love with?" To which Vikramarka replied that the minister poisoned himself, because he foolishly communicated to the king the excellence of the girl in

question, being fully aware of the king's previous conduct. Béthala once more disappeared.

Thus did Béthala abscond twenty-four times, and thus was he fetched again and again by Vikramarka.

XLI.

The Gaining of Friends.

At Rajahmundry, there lived a king Vishnuvardhana by name, who, distressed at the misconduct of his sons, requested a Brahman to instruct them in the paths of virtue. The Brahman, thereupon, began to tell them the following story of the crow, the turtle, the deer and the rat to prove to them the blessings of harmony.

There stood on the banks of the Godavari a huge cotton tree on which birds of the air used to roost at night. Laghupathanaka, king of crows, woke early one morning and saw a Kirata fowler, who appeared to him a second Yama, and said:—"I have seen this man's face at dawn. Some misfortune is sure to happen. It is not wise to remain near him." As he

was flying away as quickly as possible, the fowler approached the tree, scattered a little rice, spread his net and lay in ambush close by. Thereupon, Chitragriva, the dove-king, who was flying afar off, saw the rice and said to his fellow-doves :—“ Whence cometh this rice in a desert ? We should not crave for this rice. Once upon a time, a traveller through craving a bracelet was deceived by a tiger and died.

“ Once upon a time, an old tiger bathed and holding sacred grass in its hand stood on the bank of a tank and called aloud to a passer-by to take the golden bracelet, which he offered him. The traveller thought to himself :—‘ This is my luck. Why hesitate ? ’ So he asked the tiger to show him the bracelet and the tiger stretched forth his paw and said :—‘ See, here is the bracelet.’ The traveller said :—‘ You are a cruel beast : how can I trust you ? ’ The tiger replied :—‘ True, I was a very cruel beast in my young days and slew a host of men and cows. As a consequence, I lost my wife and children and have to live alone. But a kind man had mercy on me and advised me to give up killing men and cows, and practise good actions. I took his advice, and now I am a poor, weak brute. Why, can you not trust me ? As you are

a poor man, I wish to give this in charity to you. Go and bathe in the tank close by and you can have it.' The greedy fell into the trap, went into the water and was bogged in the mud. The tiger saw him and said :—' It is a pity you should have fallen into the mire. I will come and pull you out. Be not afraid.' Thus saying, he approached him slowly and caught hold of him. The fool as he was dying, cried out :—' This is the result of my stupid covetousness.'

The moral is that we should 'do nothing in a hurry.'

One of the doves answered :—" What's the good of excessive caution? If we are to get our food, we must run risks." On this, they all flew and were caught in the net.

When they found themselves entangled, they turned on their adviser and abused him :— " This is what comes of following your advice." While the other pigeons reproved him, Chitrarvva said :—" What is the use of crying over spilt milk? We are in a mess and must do our best to get out of it. A thought suggests itself to me. Let us all fly up together and take the net with us. When united, even weak creatures can do much." Hearing this, the doves soared

up into the sky, saying there cannot be any better suggestion. The fowler amazed thought of catching them when they alighted again, and followed them staring at the sky till they disappeared from his view, when he went home in grief.

When the birds saw this, they asked Chitragriva what was the next thing to be done. He answered:—"I have a friend, the rat-king Hiranayaka, who dwells at Vichithravana on the banks of the Gandak. He can save us by biting the netstrings with his strong teeth. Let us go to him." They took his advice and went to Hiranayaka. But the rat hearing the noise of their wings was sore afraid and would not leave his hole. Chitragriva called to him in a loud voice and said:—"Friend, why do you not speak to us?" The rat knew his voice and came out at once.

"I am delighted to see my good friend Chitragriva." When he saw the pigeons caught in the net, he was startled and said:—"Friend, what is this?" Chitragriva replied:—"Friend, this is our destiny." The rat began to gnaw at the threads, but Chitragriva said:—"Friend, this is not the way to do it. First untie the knots of

my subjects, and then mine." Hiranayaka replied :—" My teeth are very weak. I cannot cut all the knots. I will try to sever your knots as long as there is strength in my teeth. Then we shall see about the other if I have sufficient strength." To which Chitragriva replied :—" Do as you please. What can we do beyond our strength ?" To which Hiranayaka said :—" Have you not heard of the proverb, 'charity begins at home ' ?" Thereupon, Chitragriva replied :—" Friend, what you say is true enough. But I cannot endure the trouble of my subjects."

Thus pleased, Hiranayaka and he set to work and freed all the doves and after entertaining them, sent them all home rejoicing.

The *guru* further said :—Hiranayaka then entered his hole. Laghupathanaka, astonished at what he had seen, came and alighted near the hole of Hiranayaka and said :—" Oh, Hiranayaka ! I desire your friendship. Have mercy on me and fulfil my desire." Hearing this, Hiranayaka from inside the hole, said :—" Who are you ?" To which the crow replied :—" I am a crow. My name is Laghupathanaka." Hiranayaka laughed at this, and said :—" I am your lawful prey. How can we two be friends ? It

will be with us as with the deer, who was caught in the trap and owed his life to the crow."

"How was that?" enquired Laghupathanaka. So Hiranayaka went on to say:—

"A deer and a crow once lived in the forest of Mantharavati, in the land of Magadha and were close friends. The deer thrived and grew fat until a jackal saw him and thought to himself what a dainty meal he could make of him. So thinking, the jackal came to the deer and said:—'Let us be friends.' 'Who are you?' asked the deer. 'I am Subuddhi, the jackal, and I desire your friendship.' So the deer took the jackal to his lair and, when the crow who was perched on a tree close by saw them, he said to the deer:—'Who is your friend?' 'This is my dear friend, the jackal, Subuddhi,' he answered. To this the crow replied:—'Can you trust a newcomer? In days of yore, a kite, Jarathgava by name, died through having entertained a cat which story I shall tell you.'

On the banks of the Bhagirathi is a large fig tree. In a hole in its trunk, there lived Jarathgava, an old kite. The birds that lived on the tree used to share their food with him and thus he managed to live. One day, Thirghakarna, a

cat, approached the tree noiselessly intending to eat the nestlings. They cried out when they saw her, and Jarathgava, hearing the noise, looked out and espied the cat. The cat was sore afraid of the kite and thought to herself:—‘I am in evil case; I can only escape by my cunning. So the cat stood before the kite and bowed to him, whereupon the kite asked her who she was. ‘I am a cat, and people call me Thirghakarna.’ To which the kite replied:—‘Be off at once or it will be the worse for you.’ To this the cat replied:—‘Kindly let me explain.’ So the kite enquired the cat’s errand. Then she replied:—‘I have changed my course of life and become a Brahmacharin. I have long wished to meet you, and hospitality is a sacred duty.’ The kite in answer, said:—‘Cats are very fond of meat, and there are many nestlings here. This is why I spoke.’ When the cat heard this, she put her paws to her ears and invoking the Lord Krishna, swore that she had given up animal food, and was now devoted to deeds of piety. Hearing these words, the kite requested the cat not to be angry. ‘How can a person know the character of a new-comer as soon as he arrives? Come and go as you please.’ So the cat became a crony of

the kite and used to live in the same hole in the tree.

By and by, the cat used to creep out every night and eat some of the nestlings, which when the birds perceived, they began to look about. The cat cleared out at once, and the birds found the bones in the nest of the kite and pecked her to pieces.

Therefore it is that I said that we should not trust a new-comer.'

Hearing this, the jackal looked indignantly at the crow, and said:—' You two were a new-comer, when you took up with the deer. Is not a castor oil plant considered a huge tree in a treeless plain? It is only the ignorant that make a difference between a friend and foe.' Hearing this, the deer said:—' Why all this wrangling? Let us all spend our days in one place in peace.' On hearing this, the crow consented. The deer, the jackal and the crow lived together in harmony. After some days had passed, the jackal said to the deer:—' Friend! I have seen in the forest a field fully ripe. Accompany me. I will show you the field.' So saying, the fox took the deer with him and showed him the place. After this, the deer began to graze there. The owner of the field

noticed it and resolved to kill the beast. So he laid a net at a corner of the field and went home. The animal, as usual, came the next day to the field to graze and was entangled in the meshes and began to think:—‘Alas! I am caught in a net: What can I do? Who is there to rescue me? If my friend the crow chance to come, he might save me.’ The jackal was pleased at the sight and thought that his object was gained. So he went up to the deer, who said:—‘Friend, come quick and cut the net.’ The jackal said:—‘This is the holy day of Munisvara. How can I touch animal sinew on a fast day? Any other day I am at your service.’ Night came on. The crow missing the deer came to look for him and asked him what had happened. ‘This comes’, he answered, ‘of trusting a false friend.’ Meanwhile, the farmer came up, and the crow said:—‘He comes like another Yama, and we must act at once. Do as I tell you. Spread out your legs and feign to be dead.’ The deer followed his advice and, when the farmer loosed him from the net, the crow gave a caw and the deer escaped. Just then, the jackal came up in hopes of a meal; but the farmer, vexed at his mishap, killed him with a blow of his cudgel. He that digs a pit for others falls in himself.

When he heard this tale, Laghupathanaka said to Hiranayaka :—“ This is foolish talk. Accept me as your friend like Chitragriva.”

To which Hiranayaka replied :—“ You are fickle-minded. It is not advisable to make an everlasting friendship with the fickle-minded. To add to this, you are my enemy. It is not safe to be on terms of intimacy with an enemy, however good he may be. I cannot, therefore, be intimate with you.” To which Laghupathanaka replied :—“ Why talk so much without understanding my disposition ? Hear my last word. I have seen Chitragriva enjoying the pleasure of your company. I desire to be on terms of friendship with you. It is well if you fulfil my prayers. If not, I shall voluntarily starve myself to death and die.” Hiranayaka hearing this came out of the hole and said :—“ Laghupathanaka, I am very much pleased with you. I shall do what you desire me to do.” Thus saying, Hiranayaka pleased the crow by his good deeds, let him depart and entered the hole. From that time forward, the rat and the crow spent their days in friendly intercourse.

Some time after, the crow seeing the rat said :—“ Comrade, it is very difficult to eke out a live-

lihood here. I intend, therefore, to quit this desert for a suitable abode." Whereupon, Hiranyaksha replied :—"Teeth, hair, nails and men will not shine if their habitation is gone. The wise person ought, therefore, to give up the idea of quitting a residence." To which the crow replied :—"Friend, your words are weak. Elephants, lions and good men wander wheresoever they will. Crows, birds and cowards perish in their own place, not being able to quit it." Whereupon Hiranyaksha said :—"Comrade, where is it that you want to go to?" To which the crow replied :—"We should not quit an old residence without examining a new one. Therefore it is that I have not spoken to you before fixing our new quarters. There is in the forest of Dandaka a tank called Karpuragnam. In it dwells my friend Manthara, the turtle-king. He is a charitable creature. That excellent tortoise will support me with plenty of fish food." Whereupon, Hiranyaksha said :—"What can I do here after you are gone? Take me, therefore, along with you."

Laghupathanaka hearing this was very much pleased and consented to the proposal. They then began their journey with pleasant conversation on the way and reached the tank in a few days.

When Manthara saw them at a distance, he went to meet them, fetched them thither and feasted them as became their rank:

Laghupathapaka then said to Manthara :—
 “ Comrade, treat this rat-king respectfully.. He is the foremost among the virtuous, the ocean of good qualities, and is known as Hiranyaksha. Even Sesha is unable to describe his qualities. How much then am I ?”

So saying, he narrated Hiranyaksha's story in detail from the beginning. Manthara then treated Hiranyaksha with much respect and said :—
 “ Hiranyaksha, what is the cause of your living in a desert ?” To which he replied :—

“ There was a town named Champakavati which was inhabited by many Sannyasis, among whom was one Chudakarna. He would eat part of the food fetched and would hang the other portion on a wooden peg fixed in the wall and then go to sleep. I would creep noiselessly to it and would everyday partake of the food. One day, he was conversing with his friend Vinakarna and was constantly looking up and shaking his rattle and terrifying me. Vinakarna then asked Chudakarna :—‘ Why is it that you look up and shake your rattle ?’ To which he replied :—‘ A

rat every day gets up the wooden peg and partakes of the food there. It is a source of very great trouble to me.' Vinakarna hearing this said :— ' Where is the rat and where the wooden peg ? Where did such little creature get the strength to climb such a great height ? There must be some cause for this. Some time ago, I went to a Brahman's house to eat, when the Brahman called his wife and said :— ' To-morrow a few Brahmins must be fed as it is the Newmpon day. What provisions have you collected for it ? ' To which the housewife replied :— ' If the men bring home provisions, the women can cook them. If they do not bring them, what can we do ? ' Whereupon he grew exceedingly angry and turning to his wife said :— ' We must manage with the things we possess and not seek what we have not.' To which the housewife agreed and said :— ' I shall manage to-morrow's meal with the little that we have.' So saying she washed, pounded and dried a quantity of sesamum. A fowl then came and scratched away the seed. The Brahman seeing this, said :— ' The sesamum seeds have become impure and unfit for a Brahman meal. Go and exchange these for something else and return.' The housewife came the next day into the house

to which I was invited to eat, and asked the housewife if she would give ordinary sesamum in exchange for her pounded seed. The housewife gladly agreed to her proposal, took some sesamum seed in a sieve and was conversing, when the master asked her what it was that she was bargaining about. To which she said that she received pounded sesamum seed in exchange for a smaller quantity of unhusked seed. The Brahman hearing this said :—‘ O fool ! would anybody give pounded seed, in exchange for unhusked ? There must be some reason for her giving it. Do not take this grain.’ So this rat cannot have such strength and his fixed abode here without a cause.”

While Vinakarna told this tale, Chudakarna heard it, searched and found a hole where I was residing. ‘ Why should it reside here ? I shall dig it up.’ So saying, he took up an axe and dug into my hole and took away all the treasure stored up from many a long day. Being sorely vexed and unable to earn my daily bread, I was creeping sadly about when Chudakarna one day saw me and said :—“ Wealth is the root of all welfare. What is the good of life without money. This rat, having lost all his wealth, has lost with .

it his original strength." "When the Sannyasin said this, I grew dejected and thought thus within myself :—' It is not right for me to live here any longer. Nor is it proper to communicate my story to others.' Chudakarna seeing me not quitting the place aimed a fatal blow at me with his stick which I fortunately escaped. Had it struck me, I must have been for long an inhabitant of Yamaloka. So musing, I left the place and came to the jungle where life is easier for us." Manthara hearing this, said :—" Wealth is perishable, and it is useless to hoard it, as you will see from the fate of the miserly jackal."

"One day a hunter named Bhairava, of the city of Kalyana Katak, went into the forest. He slew a deer and was carrying it home when he met a wild pig. He aimed an arrow at the beast, which in his death struggle gored him and a great serpent, which lay close by. So all the three died then and there. Up came the jackal Thirgarava, and seeing the dead bodies, rejoiced at the prospect of having abundant food. But in his greediness, he thought to himself :—' The meat I will keep for use and meanwhile, I will eat the bowstring.' As soon as he began to bite the string, the arrow was released and slew him too."

When he heard these words of "Manthara, he rejoiced and said :—"Now I know the value of a good friend."

One day when they were enjoying themselves in the forest, a deer rushed up, pursued by a hunter. The tortoise in his fear shuffled into the water : the rat crept into his hole and the crow flew to the top of a tree. He looked all round, and seeing no sign of danger called to his two friends. They came out and asked the deer what had befallen him. He said :—"My name is Chitranga, and I claim your protection." So they took him into their company and all four lived pleasantly together.

One day the deer went out alone to graze, and when he did not return at the usual hour, they feared that evil may have befallen him.

They debated which of them should go in search of him. At last the crow said :—"I am the swiftest of birds, and will fly off and learn what has befallen him." He flew and flew high up in the air until he came to the place where the deer had fallen into a snare. The deer delighted to see his friend, said :—"No time, must be lost. Hasten and bring the rat Hiranayaka to gnaw the cords of the snare." So the crow went, and placing the

rat on his back speedily flew back with him. When the rat succeeded in extricating the deer, they asked him how he had fallen into this fresh disaster. "No creature," said he, "can escape his fate. When I was a little fawn, one day I fell into a snare, was caught by a hunter and taken to the king's palace. There I was reared as a pet and golden ornaments were hung on my neck. One day when wandering in the city, I was chased by boys; but the ladies of the royal seraglio found me and tied me up near the chamber of the king. That night a heavy storm of rain came on and I cried out in my joy:—'How delightful is this rain! How sweet the grass will grow for me to eat.' The king wondered to hear a beast talk in the tongue of men, and next day sent for the astrologers and told them what he had heard. They said:—'For a beast to know human speech is an event of ill omen. Your Majesty should perform rites of expiation and send the deer to a distant forest.' So they sent me from that abode of peace and safety and I came to the forest, where as you know, I fell into the snare of the hunter."

Meanwhile the tortoise was anxiously expecting his friends, the crow and the rat, and was delighted when they returned after rescuing the deer.

As they were talking, the hunter came up and missing the deer from the snare followed his touches. The crow again espied him and warned his friends. The rat got into a hole, the crow flew away and the deer hid himself in a thicket. But the hunter secured the tortoise and was carrying him off when the rat said to the deer:—“ You must repay us for rescuing you by saving the tortoise. Go into this pond, and lie down as if you were dead; the crow will sit on your back and seem as about to peck out your eyes. Then the hunter will put down the tortoise and he can escape.”

They did as he planned and the trick succeeded. The tortoise escaped and the four friends were once again united.

XLII.

The Cat and the Mouse.

There was once a large banyan tree in the midst of an extensive forest, covered with many kinds of creepers, which was the resort of a number of birds and animals. A mouse of great wisdom lived at its foot, having made a hole there with a hundred outlets, and in the branches, there lived

a cat in great happiness daily devouring many birds.

Now it happened that a Chandala came into the forest and built a hut for himself, and every evening after sunset, he spread his traps made of leatheren strings. Many animals fell into his traps every night, and it so happened that one day the cat, in a moment of heedlessness, was caught.

As soon as his foe the cat was caught, the mouse came out of his hole and began to rove about fearlessly. While trustfully roving through the forest in search of food, the mouse after a little while saw the meat that the Chandala had spread in his trap as a lure. Getting upon the trap the little animal began to eat the flesh, and even got upon his enemy entangled hopelessly in it. Intent upon eating the flesh, he did not mark his own danger, until suddenly he saw another terrible foe in the person of a restless mongoose with fiery eyes standing on his haunches, with head upraised, licking the corners of his mouth with his toungue. At the same time, he beheld yet another foe sitting on a branch of the banyan tree in the shape of a sharp-beaked nightjar.

Encompassed on all sides by danger, and seeing fear in every direction, the mouse filled with

alarm for his safety, made a high resolve. Of his three enemies, the cat was in dire distress and so, the mouse, conversant with the science of profit and well acquainted with the occasions on which war should be declared or peace made, gently addressed the cat, saying :—

“ I address thee in friendship, O cat ! Art thou alive ? I wish thee to live ! I desire the good of us both: O amiable one ! thou hast no cause for fear. Thou shalt live in happiness. I will rescue thee, if, indeed, thou dost not slay me. An excellent expedient suggests itself to me, by which thou mayest escape and I obtain great benefit. By reflecting earnestly, I have hit upon that expedient for thy sake and for my sake, for it will benefit both of us. There are the mongoose and the owl both waiting with evil intent. Only so long, O cat ! as they do not attack me, is my life safe. Possessed of wisdom as thou art, thou art my friend and I will act towards thee as a friend. Without my help, O cat ! thou canst not succeed in tearing the net; but I can cut the net for thee, if thou abstain from killing me.. Thou hast lived on this tree and I have lived at its foot. Both of us have dwelt here for many long years. All this is known to thee. He upon whom no-

body places his trust, and he, who never trusts another, are never applauded by the wise. Both of them are unhappy. For this reason, let our love for each other increase and let there be union between us. The wise never applaud endeavour when the opportunity for success has passed away. Know that this is the proper time for such an understanding between us. I wish thee to live, and thou also wishest me to live. This our compact also will bring happiness to us both. I will rescue thee and thou wilt also rescue me."

Hearing these well-chosen words, fraught with reason and highly acceptable, the cat spoke in reply:—"I am delighted with thee, O amiable one ! blessed be thou that wishest me to live. Do that without hesitation, which thou thinkest will be of use. I am certainly in great distress. Thou art, if possible, in greater distress still. Let there be a compact between us without delay. If thou rescuest me, thy service shall not go for nothing. I place myself in thy hands. I will wait upon and serve thee like a disciple. I seek thy protection and will always obey thy behests."

Thus addressed, the mouse, addressing in return the cat, who was completely under his control, said these words of grave import and high

wisdom :—" Thou hast spoken most magnanimously. It could scarcely be unexpected from one like thee. Listen to me as I disclose my expedient. I will crouch beneath thy body and so shalt thou save me from the owl and the mongoose, and I will cut the noose that entangles thee. I swear by Truth, O friend !"

The mouse, having thus made the cat understand his own interest, trustfully crouched beneath his enemy's body. Possessed of learning and thus assured by the cat, the mouse trustfully laid himself thus under the breast of the cat as if it were the lap of his father or mother. Beholding him thus ensconced, the mongoose and the owl both became hopeless of seizing their prey. Indeed, seeing the close intimacy between the mouse and the cat, the owl and the mongoose became alarmed and were filled with wonder, and felt themselves unable to wean the mouse and the cat from their compact. So they both left the spot and went away to their respective abodes.

After this the mouse, conversant with the requirements of time and place, began as he lay under the body of the cat, to cut the strings of the noose, slowly waiting for a fitting opportunity to finish his work. Distressed by the strings that

entangled him, the cat became impatient and said :—“How is it, O amiable one ! that thou dost not proceed with haste in thy work ? Dost thou disregard me now, having thyself succeeded in thy object ? Cut these strings quickly. The hunter will soon be here.”

But the mouse, possessed of intelligence, replied with these beneficial words fraught with his own good.—“Wait in silence, O amiable one ! Chase all thy fears away. We know the requirements of time. We are not wasting it. When an act is begun at an improper moment, it never becomes profitable when accomplished. If thou art freed at an unseasonable moment, I shall stand in great dread of thee. Do thou, therefore, await the opportunity. When I see the hunter approach the spot armed with weapons, I shall cut the strings at the moment of dire fear to both of us. Freed then, thou wilt ascend the tree. At that time thou, wilt not think of anything but thy own life, and it is then that I shall enter my hole in safety.”

The cat, who had quickly and properly performed his part of the covenant, now addressed the mouse, who was not expeditious in discharging his :—“I rescued thee from a terrible danger

with great promptness, so thou shouldst do what is for my good with greater expedition. If I have ever unconsciously done thee any wrong, thou shouldst not bear this in remembrance. I beg thy forgiveness. Be a little quicker."

But the mouse, possessed of intelligence and wisdom and knowledge of the Scriptures, replied with these excellent words :—“ That friendship in which there is fear and which cannot be kept without fear, should be maintained with great caution, like the hand of the snake charmer at the snake’s fangs. He who does not protect himself after having made a covenant with one that is stronger, finds that covenant productive of injury instead of benefit. Nobody is anybody’s friend, nobody is anybody’s well-wisher ; persons become friends or foes only from motives of interest. Interest enlists interest, even as tame elephants help to catch wild individuals of their own species. When a kind act has been accomplished, the doer is scarcely regarded. For this reason, all acts should be so done that something may remain to be done. So when I set thee free in the presence of the hunter, thou wilt fly for thy life without ever thinking of seizing me. Behold, all the

strings of this net but one have been cut by me, and I will cut that in time. Be comforted."

While the mouse and the cat were thus talking together, both in serious danger, the night gradually wore away, and a great and terrible fear filled the heart of the cat. When at last morning came, the Chandala appeared on the scene. His visage was frightful. His hair was black and tawny. His lips were very large and his aspect very fierce. A huge mouth extended from ear to ear, and his ears were very long. Armed with weapons and accompanied by a pack of dogs, this grim-looking man appeared on the scene. Beholding one that resembled a messenger of Yama, the cat was penetrated through and through with fright. But the mouse had very quickly cut the remaining string, and the cat ran with speed up the banyan tree. The mouse also quickly fled into his hole. The hunter, who had seen everything, took up the net and quickly left the spot.

Liberated from his great peril, the cat, from the branches of the tree, addressed the mouse:— "I hope thou dost not suspect me of any evil intent. Having given me my life, why dost thou not approach me at a time when friends should enjoy the sweetness of friendship? I have been

honored and served by thee to the best of thy power. It behoveth thee now to enjoy the company of my poor self who has become thy friend. Like disciples worshipping their preceptor, all the friends I have, all my relatives and kinsmen, will honour and worship thee. I myself too will worship thee. Be thou the lord of my body and home. Be thou the disposer of all my wealth and possessions. Be thou my honoured counsellor, and do thou rule me like a father. I swear by my life that thou hast no fear from us."

But the mouse, conversant with all that is productive of the highest good, replied in sweet words that were beneficial to himself:—"Hear how the matter appears to me. Friends should be well examined. Foes also should be well studied. In this world, a task like this is regarded by even the learned as a difficult one, depending upon acute intelligence. Friends assume the guise of foes, and foes of friends. When compacts of friendship are formed, it is difficult for either party to understand why the other party is moved. There is no such thing as a foe. There is no such thing in existence as a friend. It is the force of circumstances that creates friends and foes. He who regards his own interests en-

sured, as long as another person lives, and thinks them endangered, when another person will cease to live, takes that other person for a friend and considers him such, as long as those interests of his are not interfered with. There is no condition that deserves permanently the name either of friendship or hostility. Both arise from considerations of interest and gain. Self-interest is very powerful. He who reposes blind trust in friends and always behaves with mistrust towards foes, without paying any regard to considerations of policy, finds his life unsafe. He who disregarding all considerations of policy, sets his heart upon an affectionate union with either friends or foes, comes to be regarded as a person whose understanding has been unhinged. One should never repose trust in a person undeserving of trust. Father, mother, son, maternal uncle, sister's son, all are guided by considerations of interest and profit."

“Thou tellest me in sweet words that I am very dear to thee. Hear however, O friend! the reasons that exist on my side. One becomes dear from an adequate cause. One becomes a foe from an adequate cause. This whole world of creatures is moved by the desire of gain, in some form or

other. The friendship between two uterine brothers, the love between husband and wife, depends upon interest. I do not know any kind of affection between any person that does not rest upon some motive of self-interest. One becomes dear for one's liberality, another for his sweet words, a third in consequence of his religious acts. Generally, a person becomes dear for the purpose he serves. The affection between us two arose from a sufficient cause. That cause exists no longer. On the other hand, from adequate reason, that affection between us has come to an end. What is that, reason, I ask for which I have become so dear to thee, besides thy desire of making me thy prey? Thou shouldst know that I am not forgetful of this. Time spoils reasons. Thou seekest thy own interests. Others, however, possessed of wisdom, understand their own interests, too.

“ Guided, however, by my own interests, I myself am firm in peace and war, that are themselves very unstable. The circumstances under which peace is to be made or war declared are changed as quickly as the clouds change their form. This very day thou wert my foe. This very day again thou wert my friend. This very day thou hast once more become my enemy.

Behold the levity of the considerations that move living creatures. There was friendship between us, as long as there was reason for its existence. That reason, dependent on time, has passed away. Without it, that friendship has also passed away. Thou art by nature my *lesa*. From circumstances thou becamest my friend. That state of things has passed away. The old state of enmity that is natural has come back. Through thy power I was freed from a great danger. Through my power thou hast been freed from a similar danger. Each of us has served the other. There is no need of uniting ourselves again in friendly intercourse. O amiable one ! the object thou hadst has been accomplished. The object I had has also been accomplished. Thou hast now no need for me except to make me thy food. I am thy food. Thou art the eater. I am weak. Thou art strong. There cannot be a friendly union between us, when we are situated so unequally. I know that thou art hungry. I know that it is thy hour for taking food. Thou art seeking for thy prey, with thy eyes directed towards me. Thou hast sons and wives. Seeing me with thee, would not thy dear spouse and thy loving children cheerfully eat me up ?" "

Thus soundly rebuked by the mouse, the cat blushing with shame, addressed the mouse:—

“ Truly I swear that to injure a friend is, in my estimation, very censurable. It doth not behove thee, O good friend ! to take me for what I am not. I cherish a great friendship for thee— in consequence of thy having granted me my life. I am again acquainted with the meaning of duty. I am an appreciator of other people's merits. I am very grateful for services received. I am devoted to the service of friends. I am again especially devoted to thee. For these reasons, O good friend ! it behoveth thee to reunite thyself with me. O thou, that art acquainted with the truths of morality, it behoveth thee not to cherish any suspicion in respect of me.”

Then the mouse reflecting a little, replied with these words of grave import:—“ Thou art exceedingly kind. But for all that, I cannot trust thee. I tell thee, O friend ! the wise never place themselves without sufficient reason, in the power of a foe. Having gained his object, the weaker of two parties should not again repose confidence in the stronger. One should never trust a person who does not deserve to be trusted. Nor should one repose blind confidence in one deserving of trust.

One should always endeavour to inspire foes with confidence in himself. One should not, however, himself repose confidence in foes. In brief, the highest truth of all in reference to policy is mistrust. For this reason, mistrust of all persons is productive of the greatest good. One like myself should always guard his life from persons like thee. Do thou also protect thy life from the Chandala who is now very angry."

While the mouse thus spake, the cat, frightened at the mention of the hunter, hastily leaving the tree, ran away with great speed, and the mouse also sought shelter in a hole somewhere else

TALES
OR
KOMATI WIT AND WISDOM
25 AMUSING AND INSTRUCTIVE STORIES

BY
C. HAYAVADANA RAO, B.A., B.L
Fellow of the Anthropological Institute, London

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PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION.

THE Komatis of Madras Presidency and the Feudatory States of Hyderabad and Mysore form a respectable class of people. They are well known as traders, money-lenders, shattocks and grocers. In Madras town they are the principal purchasers and distributors of every sort of imported article. They are eminently successful in their hereditary calling and are even enterprising in its pursuit. There is a great deal of evidence to show that they were originally a homogeneous caste resident at Penu-gonda, in the present Guntur District, from which they seem to have spread in different directions in the beginning of the 11th Century A. D.

They are 'famous' throughout Southern India for their wit and 'wisdom.' People of all classes and ages recount and enjoy with great jest the stories told of them. I publish twenty-five of these in this little volume. Only three of these have before been given in print in one form or another. The rest are presented for the first time now. I have no doubt readers will enjoy the fun contained in them.

C. HAYAVADANA RAO.

EGMORE, MADRAS, }
1st October, 1907. }

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NATESAN'S PUBLICATIONS.

To the head of the enterprising firm of G. A. Natesan and Co., Madras, all those who take any interest at all in contemporary events in India which will in the future form its history are thankful for their publications. Not content with the editing and publishing of a first class monthly like the *Indian Review*, he has written, edited, and published a number of books and pamphlets which do credit not only to his scholarship but also to his business capacity. He has published short biographies and sketches of many eminent Indians e.g., Sir Pherozeshah Mehta, Lala Lajpat Rai, Mr. Surendranath Banerji, Mr. Dinsha Edulji Wacha, the late M. Ghadev Govind Ranade, Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, Swami Vivekananda, Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji, the Honorable Mr. Gopal Krishna Gokhale, Dr. Rash Behari Ghose, and Mrs. Annie Besant. They are a series of uniform booklets, each with a frontispiece and any one of which can be bought for the modest sum of two annas or four annas. He has published collections of the presidential and inaugural addresses that have been delivered at the different Congresses and Conferences that have been held within the last four years at Surat, Calcutta and Benares. And we believe his quick eye and capable hand will not let go the latest opportunity of publishing a similar collection of the recent speeches at the different Congresses and Conferences at Madras. He has published symposiums of views of officials and non-officials, Indians and Europeans on such subjects as Sedition, the Swadeshi movement, and the National Congress. By collecting the speeches and writings of Dr. Rash Behari Ghose, Swami Vivekananda, the Honorable Mr. Gopal Krishna Gokhale, Lord Morley, he has done a distinct service to both the younger and elder generations, of Indians, for these are books which the younger people like to have constantly by their side to study and the elders to refer to occasionally. It is very seldom indeed that we see business capacity in a literary man, but Mr. Natesan seems to be one of those very few men who combine in themselves both of those capacities.—*The Indian People, Allahabad.*

QUARTETTE OF BIOGRAPHIES.

There are certainly no publishing houses in India that can at all be compared with those of Murray, Constable, Blackie and Macmillan in England. Such historic concerns apart, there are very few firms that take the trouble of being up-to-date, or by the variety of their publications to form and direct the public taste or to diffuse, useful and interesting knowledge among their constituents. Among these few Messrs. Natesan and Company of Madras undoubtedly occupy the place of honour. The *Indian Review*, published by Mr. Natesan, is undoubtedly a gem of its kind and no cultured Indian cares to be without it. But the Review represents only one side of Mr. Natesan's activity. Not a month elapses but this enterprising firm brings out elaborate volumes on every kind of subject that affects the interests of India and they are generally the work of men who know what they are writing about. But one of the most popular outputs of the firm is the string of short, succinct, and instructive biographies of eminent Indians which are published from day to day. * * * Messrs. Natesan & Co. are doing a distinct and national service by issuing brief sketches of the lives of men who have played an important part in the modern epochs of Indian History. We thankfully acknowledge the receipt of all these and have great pleasure in briefly noticing them.—*The Sanjivartman, Bombay.*

TALES OF KOMATI WIT & WISDOM:

THE BLIND KOMATI AND GOD VISHNU.

A blind Komati prayed to God Vishnu for the restoration of his eyesight for a very long time. At last the beneficent Deity appeared before him and asked him what he wanted. "Oh, God ! I want to see from above the seventh storey of my mansion, my great-grandsons playing in the streets and eating their cakes from golden vessels." Vishnu was astonished at the request of the blind man which combined riches, issue and the restoration of his eyesight in one demand and granted him all of them.

THE KOMATI AND THE THIEF.

~~A~~ N old Komati observed a thief at dead of night lurking under a tree (*punica granatum*) and forthwith cried out to his wife for his stool. The woman, understanding that something unusual had happened, brought it out immediately and placed it before him. The old man sat just in front of the thief, who thought—the night being a pitch dark new-moon one—that it was perfectly accidental. The Komati then tempestuously howled for hot water, which was brought to him by his wife. The man, pretending that he was suffering from bad toothache, gorged the water and spat continuously at the wondering thief. When the water was nearly exhausted, the Komati spat a mouthful on his wife,

who bawled out that her husband had turned out mad, and was beginning to spit on her instead of at the tree as hitherto. The noise awakened their neighbours who came to inquire. "For whom have I earned," exclaimed the Komati, "the lakh and more *varghas* that I possess now, but for this woman who would not put up with one mouthful of water? Look at yonder man, behind the tree, how patient he has been all these two hours and more during which he has stood up several hundreds of mouthfuls." On this the thief was caught and handed over to the Kotwal (Chief of the Police) of the City.

III.

THE KOMATI AND HIS CAKES.

 Komati was on his way to the weekly market with his plate of cakes to vend there. A couple of wily thieves met him half way up to it and giving him a severe beating walked away with all the cakes. The discomfited Komati was returning home with his empty plate, when he was met by another Komati with a plate of his cakes going up to the fair. The latter asked how the demand for the cakes was at the fair; the former coolly replied, "Why go to the fair, when half way up people come demanding your plate?" and rapidly passed away. The unsuspecting Komati went on and was the recipient of a sound thrashing at the hands of the wily rogues a few hundreds off for his fine plate of cakes.

IV.

THE KOMATI AND THE " SMELLING " SCORPION.

A number of Komatis went to a temple one day. One of them put his right fore-finger into the navel of the Vinayakan (Belly God) at the gateway. A scorpion inside it stung him acutely. The Komati, however, put his finger to the nose and smelling it remarked, " Oh ! what a fine smell ! not experienced the like of it during my life !" This induced another of the troop to put his finger in and he was also bit. He also pretended in the same way. All of them got stung in succession and then consoled each other with quiet hearts,

THE KOMATIS AND THE MILK-TAX.

ONCE upon a time a great king levied a tax upon milk and all subjects were sorely tried on that account. The Komatis, who all kept cows, found the tax specially inconvenient. They, therefore, hit upon a mode of getting the tax repealed. They bribed the minister and mustered strong before the king and spoke of the oppressive nature of the tax. The king asked what their profit was from the milk. "A pie for a pie" said they to a man, and the king thinking that persons who profit only a pie ought not to be troubled, forthwith passed orders for the abolition of the tax.

VI.

THE KOMATI AND HIS
MOTHER-IN-LAW.

A newly married Komati once went to his mother-in-law's house and was received with great warmth there. Early next morning the mother-in-law inquired of the young man whether he would partake of a cold meal (consisting of the previous night's remnants), eat cakes or wait for hot meals until mid-day when his father-in-law would return from his shop. "Yes," says the cunning son-in-law quietly, "I shall make a hearty meal of the remnants, and be eating the cakes until father-in-law returns and it is time for hot meals."

VII.

THE KOMATI AND THE HIDDEN
P^EREASURE.

A Sanyasin (religious ascetic) passing through a forest dug some roots at a spot and finding a vessel of hidden treasure there, cursed the same, buried it, and passed on. A Komati, who had followed and seen him sit at the spot for a while, came to it and saw traces of disturbed earth and he resolved to examine and see what lay underneath. He dug a short while and behold ! he saw a vessel full of scorpions of all sizes and attitudes. The Komati, wise as he was, was not to be disappointed. He removed the vessel coolly, took it to his shop and deposited it close to his own seat. He caught one of the bigger scorpions and fastening a thread to its tail, suspended it by the roofing of his shop. Several of his constituents inquired of the Komati as to his

object in so suspending from day to day this particular scorpion and to all of them he kept on replying that he wanted them to see the wondrous size it had grown to. At last, a poor looking Brahman turned up at his shop and seeing the suspended scorpion, remarked, " Oh Chetty I thought you too wise to hang up the golden scorpion this wise. Would it not be fast, if you kept it in this fashion?" "I am glad to see you oh! Reverend Sir," rejoined the astute Komati, " would you please take it up and throw it into this box" (unlocking and opening it a little)? The unsuspecting Brahman snatched the suspended scorpion and threw it into the box, the live scorpions in which turned immediately into golden ones.*

* The common belief about hidden treasure amongst Hindus is that only particular persons see it in its true form, while others see it as coal serpents, scorpions, and so forth. In the story, where the Sanyasin saw gold, the Komati saw only scorpions!

VIII.

THE KOMATI AND HIS POLITE RETORT.

AN old Komati who had been long keeping a shop was one day met by an angry constituent of his who charged him with extortionate prices. "A vile race of men," burst forth the man, "nothing will curb your over-reaching character but the limits of your own avarice. A plague on you and all yours!" The patient Komati coolly asked, "Do you want dried grapes?" "Shall I let you have some good almonds?" "Words but befit the mouths of those that use them;" "May I give you some (crystal) sugar?" Do you not want something sweet to the tongue?" The constituent cooled down a great deal and apologised for his bad temper and went home a sadder but wiser man.

THE KOMATIS AND THE PANDYAN KING.

ONCE upon a time a Pandyan King had a new silver goblet of enormous size made for the use of the palace, and he superstitiously believed that its first contents should not be of the ordinary kind. So, in view of making special use of it, he ordered his minister to publish abroad that all the subjects of his kingdom were to put into the vessel a *chembusful* * of milk from each house. The frugal Komatis hearing of this, thought each within himself, "Oh ! when the king has ordered such a large quantity and all will bring milk, it will be enough for me to take a *chembusful* of water, as a little water poured into such a large quantity of

* *Chembu*, in Tamil and Telugu means a small vessel.

milk will not change its colour. It will not be known that I poured in only water, and I shall pass off as having given my tribute. In this way all the Komatis brought each a *chembuful* of water, and one did not inform the other of the trick. He was about to play. Now, it so happened that the Komatis were the first to enter the palace, while they thought that the people of other castes had come and gone. The vessel was placed behind a screen, so that no one might cast the evil eye on it; and the Komatis were let in one by one to do honour to it. This they did in all haste and each returned with great joy in the success of his trick. Thus there was nothing but water in the vessel. Now it had been arranged that the king was to be the first to see the contents of his new vessel, and when he went to the apartment where the vessel was kept and saw its contents he was thunderstruck to

see only water, and was greatly disappointed. He became enraged at the Komatis, and directed his minister to punish them severely. The ready-witted Komatis, however, came forward with all presence of mind and cried out, "Oh Gracious King! appease thy anger and kindly listen to what we have to say. We each brought a *chembuful* of water to find out how many *chembufulls* your Highness's precious vessel contained. Now that we have taken the measurement, we will forthwith fetch the quantity of milk required." The King was extremely pleased to hear this and sent them away.*

* This story is narrated by Mr. Sri Kantalaiyar in the *Indian Antiquary*, vol. xx.

X

THE KOMATI AND HIS PICKLES.

SIR—I am a Coompty Chetty of Madras"—wrote a Komati to a Madras newspaper some 25 years ago*— Merchant and indent Oilman Storesman, and I have one complaint against that Steamer Agent gentleman. Sir, sometimes very often I have got claims for breaking those boxes by English lascar who I understand eating those Cross and Blackwell pickles, specially Morton's Jams and Moir Marmalade, which, of course, are very suitable. Of course I make claim, of course Rs. 2 for each shilling as per invoice and Bill of Lading attached, that usual indent merchant business. I send in claim to that Steamer Agent. He never take notice but stopping quiet to see me come or write lawyer letter.

* *Madras Mail* for June 28, 1883.

Better to go though, no expense, so I go to office: "How do you do, Sir; I very glad to see you," says the Agent, "take chair." Then he calling "clerk" and ordering him to give shipping order at current rate. I explaining then that "I don't want the shipping, order, but small claim about those pickles." Then his face all change and taking one double barrel pistol and one sword out and putting on desk, remarking that time I came in he thought me respectable shipping order man, but only claim man. Sir, I then a little frightened and offering to accept Rs. 1-12—each shilling invoice value, but still he never agree. He then ordering your petitioner, to hold two wires for a minute while he examine claim. That agent then turning one handle and ringing bell. "Io, Ah, Bah." I getting then palsy both hands but, Sir, I cannot leave those wires, that agent all

time insisting me to take twelve annas per shilling, which although too much loss I quickly saying yes, yes, and he paying that count. Sir, now I object that bell business, people telling that go doubt plenty fun for agent, but also claim business spoiling; then how I can I live?"

"From our correspondent's description;" added the Editor, "we should say his remedy is an action for *Battery*."

*THE KOMATI AND HIS DISPUTING
HORSEOWNERS.*

A Hindu and a Musalman claimed the ownership of the same horse. Each said that the animal was his and each adduced the same Komati to depose to the fact of his own ownership. The Hindu asked him if he did not know that the animal belonged to him for a long number of years past. "Yes," says the Komati. The Musalman asked him "Did you not see him riding the horse half way up the ghat road?" "Yes" answers the Komati. "Then," questions the Judge, "Do you say that the horse belongs to both?" "I should rather think so. The forepart of it looks like that of the Musalman and the hindpart like the Hindu's." The bewildered Judge confiscated the horse to the Nawab's stables.

XII.

THE KOMATI AND HIS HOARD

DURING the days of Nawab Satulla Khan,* a Komati kept a big grain shop at Arcot and made a large fortune for himself. Those were days when the modern Banks were not in existence. So, the Komati stored away in pots that lay buried, some under his bedstead and others near his hearth. When he became an old man, he lay sick one day on his couch. The thought flashed on his mind "How to leave my rupees and die?" He immediately called for his wife and asked her to unearth the treasure pots

* "During the days of Nawab Satulla Khan" is equivalent to the familiar English phrase "Queen's Anne's days." Satulla Khan referred to here is the Sadat Ulla Khan of Karnatic History. He was Nawab from 1710 to 1732. His rule was a beneficent one and is still remembered as one of the happiest in South Indian History before the country passed into British hands.

and bring them before him. She brought the pots one by one and arranged them in a line before him. The old man looked at them for a short time and heaving a long sigh ordered his wife to pour down their contents on the ground. She obeyed. He then got up from his bed and asked her to arrange his bed upon the spread money. He lay down on it and rolled from left to right and then said to his wife " Oh ! woman ! I am dying leaving my treasure behind. Waste not it by building *Chutrams* for they are but places fit for idlers and loafers. Dig as many tanks and ponds as you can with it and let human beings, animals and birds drink from them and bless us for ever."

XIII.

THE KOMATI AND THE BRAHMAN.

A N old Komati unwittingly killed a cat which had for long enraged him by drinking away the milk kept for his use. He felt sorry, however, that he ever had anything to do with the animal, for according to the Hindus, it is a very heinous sin even to disturb a single hair of that cunning beast. The uneasy Komati, accordingly called for his Purohit (Brahman priest) and asked him if anything could expiate the sin he had committed. "Yes, if you will make a likeness of the animal in gold and make gift of it to me," says the Brahman. "Supposing," asks the Komati "a man is too poor for that, what must he do instead?" "Give a silver one of course."

“Suppose,” rejoins the Komati, the man is poorer still.” “Well, a jaggery one will do,” says the Brahman. “That will do for me,” muttered the economical Komati and instantaneously called for his wife and taking her aside let her know the whole matter and asked her to get things ready for his ceremonial purification. He then bathed and calling the Brahman asked him to perform the ceremonies proper to the occasion. “Bring the golden cat,” says the Brahman. “Go on with the jaggery one for the nonce” replies the Komati. “You are not so poor as to send me away with a jaggery one” says the Brahman. “Nor am I so rich as to afford a golden one” replies the Komati. “Go on, with the ceremony and we shall see,” adds the Komati’s wife. Too late to recede, the Brahman officiated and went home with the jaggery cat and a rupee in addition.

through the kind intercession of the Komati's wife.*

* According to Hindu ideas it is sinful to molest in any manner the cat, and the taking of a likeness of that animal in expiation for any misdeed done to it is held to be even more sinful. Respectable Brahmins all over South India refuse to have anything to do with such a gift as that.

This story is also related somewhat differently. At the end of the ceremony, another version goes, the Brahman and the Komati again quarrelled about the jaggery cat. At its conclusion, the Komati put the jaggery cat into his mouth and swallowing it said, "The jaggery to me and the sin of killing the cat to you."

THE KOMATI AND THE QUARREL-
SOME BEGGARS.

TWO beggars, one a professional and the other a famine-made beggar* entered the same house, one after the other and as they came out of it with their alms fell out and spoke angry words against each other. Then they came to blows. A Komati, who was standing beside them, was afterwards cited by both of them as a witness. When the Judge asked him who beat first, the Komati unwilling to offend either party (after all beggars!) deposed that he saw Rama and Thetmama (the

* South Indian beggars are divided into two classes *Panjashandi* and *Paramparandi*. The former are famine-made beggars and the latter are beggars from generation to generation. The former, a common saying goes, would rob from the person of a child at a convenient opportunity; while the latter would jump into a well and pick up a child which had fallen into it by an accident and make it over to its parents.

beggars) ; standing before each other and himself beside them and as they were exchanging angry words a horrible dust storm blew and he shut his eyes, immediately after which the sound of blows reached his ears but, situated as he was, he could not now say whether Rama beat Thimma first or Thimma beat Rama first. The Judge left the beggars off with a warning.

THE 'KOMATI' AND THE ROBBERS.

A hundred years ago the highways of Southern India were infested with robbers, who plundered the wayfarers that passed through them. A Komati and his wife went on a pilgrimage to Tirupati and were returning to their own place about 70 miles from it. While not far away from their own town, a gang of thieves, mistaking their carriage for that of the local Tahsildar* by the jingling bells tied in the necks of the bulls, dispersed far and wide leaving only one behind them, who stood concealed beside a huge tamarijd tree to see if their misapprehension was right or not. Finding from the hoarse voice of the Komati that the cart was not that of the Tahsildar, he stepped out and

* Revenue Officer of a portion of a District.

beckoned to the driver to stop. He did so. Turning back, he came to the Komati and demanded from him his money bag. "Well my man," said the Komati, "I am glad to see you here. How many are you in number. Hope all of you are doing well." "Yes" answered the robber. "We are nine and I want your bag" "Never mind the rest, you mean?" "Yes, I want your bag," rejoined the robber. "That is hardly right. Here, I have nine rupees, and you can take your share (handing the rupee) and as for the rest ask them to come to my shop and they shall have their shares." The guileless robber took the rupee and went and told his fraternity of what happened. The gang marched in a body not long afterwards to the Komati's shop, where he recognised them and handed them up to the Kotwal. Thus were the deceivers deceived by the just Komati.

XVI.

THE KOMATI AND THE ROTTEN PLANTAINS.

A Komati got a basket of plantains as a present from one of his numerous constituents. He and his wife—the only two of his household—ate them continuously for a number of days. As may be expected, a good many of the fruits were at last found to be completely rotten. On hearing this from his wife, the Komati ordered her to give them off to the cow. "They refuse to eat them," replied the woman. "Then make a gift of them to the Brahman," coolly said the Komati.

XVII.

'THE 'KOMATI'S SHORT-CUT TO. HEAVEN.'

"Komati" on his death was taken before Yama* by his angels, Chitra and ~~Chitra~~. These are said to be the accountants of Yama, who keep regular lists of the good and bad acts of each human being. On turning over their accounts, the angels found that the Komati had not done even a single good act to deserve being sent to Heaven. But he had, the angels declared, off and on pointed by his forefinger to warfarers the houses of gentlemen who would either feed or make money presents to them. Yama, on hearing this, ordered that the Komati's hand must be made to touch Heaven and then the Komati sent down to Hell. Almost immediately afterwards, however, the

angel accountants found that the Komati had been by a mistake recalled too soon for punishment. Yama directed them to send him back to the mortal world to live out his allotted span of life. On his return, the Komati hit upon a novel short-cut to Heaven. He remembered well enough the reasons that induced Yama to order his hand being sent for a short while to Heaven. To insure his whole body being sent there, the next time he was called to account for his life's work in this world, he ever afterwards pointed the houses of charitable people by shakes to right and left of his whole body.

XVIII,

THE KOMATI COUPLE AND THE MAN ON THE ROOF.

JUST as a Komati couple entered their bedroom and lay down on their beds, the husband perceived a thief perched on the roof of the house. His wife being then with child, he asked her in a low voice "what child do you think we shall be blessed with, male or female?" "A female child," says the wife, "and I shall call her Sita." "Oh ! No," says the husband, "it will be a male child and I shall call him Rama." They went on hotly discussing the probabilities for sometime. At last the husband cried out loudly as if to show his fixed determination: "I shall call my child oh ! Rama ! oh ! Rama ! come, come along." Now, the Komati was the headman of the

village and knew that his Talayari* named also Rama, was sleeping on the pial outside the house. On hearing the voice of his master, he rapt at the door so continuously that a crowd gathered round him and asked what was up. Just then the Komati came out of his bedroom and opened the doors. Bringing the assembled crowd into his bedroom, he said, look here, nothing happened betwixt us but a petty quarrel about the sex of the child that was to be born to us. I did no more than say that I thought it would be a male child and that I would call it Rama and Rama only. I did not beat her (pointing to his wife) though she raised a howl that would make others misunderstand. If you are not satisfied with what I have said, you may ask the gentleman on the roof, who has been an attentive witness, to all that has happened"

(showing up the thief). The "gentleman of the night" was summoned down and put in logs, preparatory to his being sent on to the Kotwal of the nearest town.



THE KOMATI AND HIS JEWEL LOAD.

A Komati and his wife were returning home from a neighbouring village and, as they were approaching it, night set in. The darkness was so great that further marching was out of question just then. So they decided to halt at a roadside village close to which they had come. They walked into it and entered into a decent looking structure, which happened to be the village headman's house and he put them up for the night. The cautious Komati, wishing to guard himself and the load of jewellery he carried with him against the molestations of the headman and his servants,* tried to enter into

* In pre-British days village heads were themselves thieves and receivers of stolen property. In some places they are even yet so.

conversation with another Komati who happened to live opposite to the house in which he himself halted. In this he succeeded and after a few minutes a big quarrel ensued between them both. The headman and other elders of the village tried to amicably settle their differences but all to no purpose. The quarrel grew fiercer and fiercer until daybreak, when the Komati took his leave. The whole village wondered at the manner in which he contrived to keep it wide awake all through the night—just to aid him in guarding his load.

THE KOMATI AND HIS LOST
WEALTH.

A rich Komati's house was broken into by a gang of thieves, who carried away all that was of worth in it. At daybreak, the Kotwal stepped into the house to make his usual inquiries. He asked the Komati what all he had lost. "Lost!" ejaculated the Komati, "Why? lost nothing more than, the old broom-stick behind the back of my house." "What?" rejoined the wondering Kotwal, "You have lost nothing? The whole city says you lost everything valuable you ever possessed." "The city may, perhaps, know better than myself," said the Komati coolly, "but I say the thieves

themselves must have subsequently repented why they did not choose a richer house."*

* "No Komati ever wishes that his real worth should be known. The phrase "Komatiguttu" (the secret of a Komati) is a common one! During pre-British days, when rich men were maltreated for the illegal seizure of their wealth by local Chiefs and Nawabs, there was a special temptation for perpetuating this phase of the Komati character.

XXI.

THE KOMATI AND THE GHEE POT.

AKomati was returning with a pot full of ghee from the bazaar. About half way up he saw a sovereign lying on the road. With the intent of picking it up without others noticing the same, he let down the pot on it and the broken pieces and the overflowing ghee covered it up. Cursing his fate, he collected as much of the ghee as he could, of course with the coin, and putting it on the largest of the broken pieces, returned home. "The Komati would not have broken the pot without some clear profit in view" remarked a cunning by-stander.*

* This is still the popular idea about Komatis in general. No Komati will ever undertake to do a business without assuring himself of a clear profit by it.

XXII.

THE KOMATI WHO CLAIMED
KINDRÉD.

AKomati was counting his collections for the day. Another Komati was standing before him talking. A strong wind blew off the light. The counting Komati, fearing lest the other person should pick up some of the money, went up to him and, catching hold of both of his hands, embraced him and said, "Bava, (lit. brother-in-law) Bava,* don't be offended. Never mind the ill omen.† We can cast lots.‡ What say you?"

* Komatis are fond of addressing each other in this manner. The wife is the best of relatives and her brother is commonly held to be the next best relative.

† The going off of the light when two are talking to each other is considered by Hindus an ill omen.

‡ This is usually done by throwing two slips of written paper rolled before the household images and asking a child to pick up one of them. If what is written on it is favourable, the project is pursued further; if not, it is given up.

By then the lamp was re-lighted and the Komati settled down again with an easy conscience on his seat and recommenced his counting and conversation.

XXIII.

THE KOMATI WOMAN WHO OUTWITTED THE HOUSE-BREAKER.

A Komati woman was preparing cakes for the morrow's sale at the bazaar. It was rather late in the night, being past midnight. A house-breaker, not knowing that the woman was inside the room, bore a hole in the wall. He let in turn his hands and legs inside it to try its dimensions. The woman, knowing that a thief had come, sat unperturbed for a while. He then let in his head, and the woman poured coolly a little of the boiling oil that was in the pan. The thief lay insensate and was easily caught hold of and made over to the authorities.

THE KOMATI WHO SITS THE
STAKE.

ONCE upon a time there li'vēd' a Komati who owned a big house. Being (as all houses were in 'olden times) built of mud, it wanted repairs. The Komati ordered a set of Wodders (Earth-diggers) to do this for him. During the night of the repairs, a thief came and not knowing that the upper portion of the wall had just that morning been patched up, bore a hole in it and put his head in it, when unfortunately for him the whole wall came down upon him and suffocated him to death. His comrade found him next morning with the major portion of his body hanging out of the wall. He reported the matter to the Kotwāl and with his help the matter was taken before the king for adjudication. The king,

however, was a very stupid person. The Komati explained that the thief met his death at the hands of God ; for, had he not, said he, come to steal in the dead of night, when he and all his belongings could not protect themselves ? But the king was not satisfied. He also said that the Komati, being a stout man, was eminently fit for the stake, to which he ordered he should be driven. The Komati, however, was determined not to lose his life through the stupidity of the king. He contrived to bribe a couple of scoundrels, who were up to anything, to avert the fate to which he was doomed by the sentence of the king. In accordance with the advice tendered to them, they appeared before the king, on the morning of the day on which the sentence was to be executed. One of them said "Oh ! king ! the man that is impaled to-day will be born again as the king of this

country. I want to be executed so that I may be born king, but this scoundrel is anxious to become himself king in his next birth." The other rogue requested the king that he may be permitted to take the Komati's place that morning, so that he may be born king in his next birth. The foolish king would not break the usurpation of his kingdom. "Fie upon you rogues," he broke out, "I shall never consent to my throne being occupied by you fellows. Let the Komati be released. I shall myself proceed to the stake, and be reborn as the king of my own country." The stupid king thus killed himself on the stake, to which he ordered the innocent Komati, to be driven.

* This story will be found narrated in a somewhat different manner in the *Indian Antiquary* xx. 78 p. The proverb *Kashuvukku Eththa Komati* is usually explained by this tale.

THE KOMATI AND HIS GIFT COW.

A rich Komati and his wife were for long at loggerheads on the subject of charity. The wife was never wearied of urging upon her husband the paramount necessity of doing some charitable act or another. But the husband proved a very hard nut for her to crack. One day, however, the husband approached his wife, as she lay sick on her bed and said to her that he had made up his mind to make a pious gift. Joyful that at last God gave good sense to her husband, she started up from her bed and asked what gift he intended to give. "Our reddish-brown cow," said the husband. This pleased the woman more than ever, for, the gift of a cow among Hindus is accounted one of the greatest of gifts that a person can make. The cow, however,

was an old one and was in a very weak state, which was unknown to the sick wife. The Komati had determined to get rid of it in a pious manner, for, if it died while in his possession he was to bear its burial charges himself and pay a fine as well to the king of the country, according to certain laws in force. Accordingly he was on the look-out for a Brahmin. As luck would have it, a Brahman with a copper bowl in his hand just then came in for a handful of alms. The Komati welcomed him with great respect, and told him of his intended gift. The Brahman readily consented and unaware of the true condition of the animal performed the requisite ceremonies and the gift was formally made by the pouring of the water. The animal was led off and pushed through the gateway of the house to be driven away by the Brahman, for the keeping of the

animal after the gift is held sinful among the Hindus. The Brahman drove it a few hundred yards and the old animal lay down and expired. The Kotwal turned up demanding the king's fine, but says the Komati, "Oh ! no ; it is not my animal, ask the Brahman." The Brahman protested that he had it as a gift just then from the Komati and so the Komati was liable for the fine. The Komati, however, would not hear the Brahman's protestations. Having taken the gift and led the animal off, he was liable, he said, under the law. "I have no means to pay the fine" said the Brahman. "That does not matter," interjected the Komati, "give the copper bowl and that will do." The Brahman mendicant lost even that which he had, through the ingenuity of the charitable Komati.

